



Summer
Newsletter
May 2026

Welcome to the summer edition of our newsletter. As I write the sun is shining on a Bank Holiday Monday and I hope you are able to enjoy the sunshine, or keep your cool, whichever suits you best.

This quarters newsletter is a bumper edition with news from our CoChairs, stories of events that have happened around the connexion, and lots of reports from our annual Conference held in April at



Swanwick, with our keynote speaker Carolyn Godfrey.

I hope you get a flavour of the event from the various contributions, which come from both attendees and contributors, and if you want to know more then many of the sessions are available on our YouTube channel.



Looking ahead Methodist Women in Britain will have a presence at the Methodist Conference in Telford next

month. Our stall will feature our Arise and Shine tracker as we seek to harness all our small acts and show the presence and impact MWiB has across the districts.

We are also hosting a fringe event, our fourth Mary Bosanquet Lecture which this year will be given by Rev'd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson who is the Moderator of the

Free Churches Group. Once again we are providing a platform for a prominent woman theologian to speak and we are looking forward to her lecture entitled: 'The Authority of the Called: Women, Voice and the Future of the Church'. Saturday 27th June, 7-9pm in room Ludlow 1, Telford international Conference Centre. All welcome.



Finally, will you please consider prayerfully the adverts for various Trustee roles in Methodist Women in Britain included in this quarters newsletter. As we restructure to continue moving forward is God calling you, or someone you know, to join our team?

Bronwen Braidell Communications Officer

The "Waiting Room" and the Railcard: A New Season with Methodist Women in Britain

By Olive Ruvimbo Ruzvidzo, Co-Chair of MWiB



If there is one thing a decade in the UK immigration system teaches you, it is the fine art of the "Waiting Room." It is a place where time stands still, where the coffee is always lukewarm and where your identity feels perpetually "pending." As I journey through my first year as Co-Chair of Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB), I've come to realise that God never wastes a waiting room. It is often in those quiet, frustrating pauses that He prepares us for the most active seasons of our lives.

The call of **Isaiah 60:1**—*"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you"*—is currently echoing through the halls of MWiB. It is a prophetic nudge that reminds us that the time for waiting is over.

As the great Harriet Tubman once said: **"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."** For our movement, this is a season of motion, "real talk," and a bit of a spring clean.

Since taking up this role, my office has frequently relocated to the British Rail network. I have become a connoisseur of the "quiet carriage" and a master of the lukewarm panini. But there is a deep, anecdotal theology to these tracks.

On a recent journey to visit a District, I sat opposite a woman who was frantically trying to finish a report on her laptop while juggling a toddler and a very leaky juice box. We shared a look of mutual exhaustion and as I helped her retrieve a runaway crayon, we started talking. She shared with me that she loved her church, but she felt her "calling" was currently buried under a mountain of domestic and professional "stuff."

I thought of the words of Catherine Mumford Booth, co-founder of The Salvation Army, who famously stated: **"If we are to better the future, we must disturb the present."**

I shared with her that for ten years, I felt my own calling was buried under a mountain of legal paperwork. But the beauty of the Methodist Connection is that we don't have to "Arise" alone. We travel together. Whether it's on a Virgin Pendolino or in a church hall over a plate of biscuits, MWiB is about finding the woman in the next seat and saying, "I'll hold the juice box while you find your light."

Our movement is elevating its voice in some very modern ways. We've been hosting webinars on topics that, historically, have been met with a "Holy Silence" in our pews. We've been leaning into "Real Talk" about women's health, social justice and the barriers that keep women from stepping into leadership.

As Maya Angelou wisely wrote: **"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women."**

There is a certain wit and wisdom that emerges when women gather to tell the truth. We've discovered that when you stop whispering about the difficult things, they lose their power over you. By bringing these conversations into the spotlight, we aren't just "talking"; we are clearing the path for the next generation to walk with their heads held high.



Currently, I am spending a fair amount of time with the Governance Committee. While the word *governance* can act as a powerful sedative, in the context of our Strategic Restructuring Programme, I prefer to think of it as "polishing the lamp."

I spent ten years navigating a system that was often clunky and confusing. It gave me a strange, perhaps slightly eccentric, passion for making sure our own "systems" are the opposite.

We are currently interfacing with Charity Laws to ensure that MWiB remains lean, transparent, progressive and strong. We are doing the "boring" administrative heavy lifting now so that the mission can shine brighter.

As in **Hebrews 12:1**: *"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."* We are restructuring so we can run that race without tripping over our own feet.

In August, I will represent the British Unit at the World Federation for Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW) World Assembly in New Zealand. As I prepare to take my seat as a Voting Delegate, I won't just be thinking about the grand speeches. I'll be thinking about the woman with the juice box on the train. I'll be thinking about the women in our webinars who finally felt seen.

Don't let your "waiting room" define you. Whether you are stuck in a personal state of limbo, a professional rut or a spiritual dry spell, the tracks are still there. As Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, whose legacy we still celebrate, once noted: **"I will be a witness for my Lord."**

The glory of the Lord has risen; the train is at the platform and trust me - the view from the carriage is much better than the waiting room.

Arise, shine. And don't forget your railcard!

(This article was also published in the Methodist Recorder)



**Methodist Conference Fringe Event
– Mary Bosanquet Lecture**



**Saturday 27th June 2026, 7 – 9pm in Ludlow 1
Telford International Conference Centre**

Hosted by Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB), this annual lecture honours the legacy of Mary Bosanquet, a pioneer of female leadership in early Methodism.

This year, we are honoured to welcome **Revd Dr. Tessa Henry-Robinson** – a womanist practical theologian, Moderator of the Free Churches Group, and the first Black woman to serve as Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly.

Under the theme **"The Authority of the Called: Women, Voice, and the Future of the Church,"** Dr. Henry-Robinson will bring her internationally respected leadership and "real talk" to the intersection of faith and racial justice. Formed by Methodist, Roman Catholic, and URC traditions, her ministry is a testament to intercultural transformation and the flourishing of communities across difference.

By bridging rigorous scholarship with the courageous "Power and Purpose" of lived experience, this lecture challenges the Methodist Connexion to listen to marginalised voices and engage with global concerns.

Join us for an evening of transformative wisdom and a call to action for the future of the Church.

All Welcome, no booking required

An Update Regarding MWiB Leadership

Dear Friends,

It is with a mixture of sadness and deep gratitude that the Executive and Trustees share the news that **Rev Leonora Wassell** has tendered her resignation as **Co-Chair of MWiB**, effective at the end of the current Connexional Year.

Following a period of persistent ill health, Leonora has reached the difficult decision to prioritize her recovery and well-being. In her message to the Executive, she shared that serving as Co-Chair has been one of her "greatest joys and privileges," but she recognizes that the role deserves a level of consistent energy that she is currently unable to provide.

Celebrating a Season of Leadership

We are profoundly grateful for the wisdom, spiritual depth, and heartfelt leadership Leonora has brought to our community. From her dedicated presence at **District Days** to her guidance in leading **retreats** and shaping our shared vision, her impact has been deeply felt. While she steps away from her formal leadership role, Leonora remains a steadfast champion of our mission and will continue to support MWiB in other capacities as her health allows.

We want to reassure all that the heart and work of MWiB remains strong and vibrant. Our commitment to our global and local missions is unwavering. We continue to move forward with confidence and excitement for the year ahead.

Continued Connection: Our Executive Team is working closely together to ensure a smooth transition and the continued growth of the women we serve.

We ask that you join us in holding Leonora in your prayers, asking for peace and strength for her in this coming season of rest.

Thank you for your continued partnership and faith as we "Arise and Shine" together.

With every blessing,

The MWiB Executive Team & the Governance Committee

(Please address any queries regarding this statement to: governance.mwib@gmail.com)

In view of the above statement, and with the ongoing restructuring of MWiB to ensure that it remains a robust and sustainable organization going forward, you will find adverts and role descriptions with your newsletter. Please circulate widely among your networks, have conversations and prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to join the team.

Methodist Women in Britain has a long and faithful history of prayer, service, fellowship, and witness. Across generations, Methodist women have supported churches, cared for communities, encouraged one another in faith, and worked for justice both locally and globally. Much of what continues in our churches today has been strengthened by the dedication, compassion, and perseverance of women who quietly and faithfully served God and others. We give thanks for that heritage.

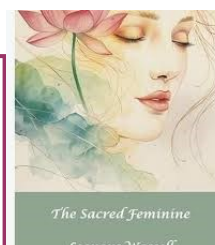
At the same time, we are called not only to look back with gratitude, but also to look forward with honesty and hope. Like many organisations and churches, we are living in a changing world. Patterns of work, family life, worship, and community have altered significantly, and we must ask ourselves how we continue to fulfil our purpose in ways that are meaningful and welcoming today. Many of our groups are ageing, and we often struggle to engage younger women whose lives may already be full of work, caring responsibilities, and other commitments. Traditional meeting formats that once served us well may no longer suit modern lifestyles. We also need to reflect on whether all women feel included and represented, regardless of culture, background, disability, confidence, or life experience.

There is also an important challenge for us as Christians: are we simply maintaining cherished traditions, or are we responding actively to where God is leading us now? Renewal does not mean abandoning our values or losing our identity. Rather, it means being willing to listen, adapt, and grow so that our witness remains alive, compassionate, and relevant. Our strengths remain considerable. We continue to offer friendship, pastoral care, prayerful support, generosity, wisdom, and commitment. Methodist women are often at the heart of community outreach, fundraising, worship, and practical service. These gifts are deeply valued and still greatly needed.

Yet renewal asks something more of us. It invites us to be open to new ideas, new voices, and new ways of gathering and serving. It challenges us to encourage future generations, to strengthen women's confidence in leadership and discipleship, and to continue speaking with courage on issues of justice and compassion. Above all, renewal is a spiritual journey. It begins with prayerful honesty and trust that God is not finished with us yet. As we move forward together, may we honour the faithfulness of the past while remaining open to the new things God may be calling us to become.

Over my two years in office, I have been impressed by the dedication and commitment by those within the organisation. However, I have also seen the worries of many trying to maintain the system. Some areas are struggling to function as an effective group. Why is it important to still have a presence of Methodist Women in Britain? Are you prepared to take up the baton?

Leonora has written Monday Meditations which appear each week on our website mwib.org.uk and has also published a book: *The Sacred Feminine* available on Amazon. We continue to value her contributions to MWIB.





Easter Offering 2026

Former CoChair Maggie Woods is pictured with Revd Ian Couchman & Dawn Novis circuit rep for MWiB at Calvert Memorial Methodist Church, Hastings after the Easter Offering service, where Maggie shared about her visit to Rwanda and Dawn shared the circuit's involvement with Tabita House.

Maggie says "the music was amazing with two choirs, the Zimbabwe ladies choir getting us on our feet dancing!"

Methodist Women in Britain Empowerment Gift Application Form 2026

Applications are now open for this year's Empowerment Gifts.

We are looking at projects under £3,000 which will be completed within a year.

If you feel you have a project that meets the criteria for an Empowerment Gift, please complete the Application Form which is on the Methodist Women in Britain website.

The closing date for applications is the 31st July, 2026

Sylvia White (MWIB Empowerment Gifts)

Whose Bag is it Anyway.....?

This is an inter-faith/environmental resource, which was produced jointly by MWiB and Touchstone Interfaith Centre, with the aid of a grant from the Swiss World Day of Prayer Committee. Owing to covid and other issues beyond our control, the project had to be curtailed, but we are now offering the planning as a resource for MWiB groups. The planning consists of six sessions, but these can be condensed or used as you wish. Although it was initially designed as an interfaith project, it can be used by just MWiB groups to introduce how Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh religions view Creation, and their response. Craft activities are incorporated into the programme and canvas tote bags can be obtained very cheaply on the internet for participants to design and decorate with 'Eco' messages.

I am willing to lead District Days on the theme, if you would like to invite me.

Ruth Parrott (Former CoChair MWiB) *Contact Ruth via: communications.mwib@gmail.com*

You may remember that over the past few years Hannah Worthen and I have been working with the Methodist Women's Collection at Epworth Old Rectory to explore histories of Methodist women in Britain since 1945.

In March, we published an article from this research in *Women's History Review*. The article focuses on the Over the Rainbow event organised by Network in 1990 to stand in solidarity with those campaigning against apartheid.

The article is free for anyone to download using the link below. So please do share with anyone you think might find it interesting.

Ruth Slatter and Hannah Worthen, **Women, faith, and anti-apartheid activism in late twentieth-century Britain**, *Women's History Review*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09612025.2026.2639241>

Dr Ruth Slatter (Lecturer in Historic Environment Knowledge Exchange Manager)

See the latest news from Epworth Old Rectory here: <https://epwortholdrectory.org.uk/>

Barbara Dickinson.

Barbara was a mission partner with the Methodist Church and Nurse Tutor at Maua Methodist Hospital, Kenya 1980 -2015. She died peacefully at home on 21 February. Her funeral was held at Lanchester Methodist Church on 13th March.

Donations to Macmillan Cancer Support.

Barbara spoke at many women's meetings (in all its forms) during her furloughs as well as taking services as a Local Preacher. In view of the number of women who have prayed for her, supported the World Mission Fund and followed her through the years I thought it important to inform MWiB of her passing and mark her faithful and joyous service.

Sharon Harbottle

Methodist Conference Fringe Event – Mary Bosanquet Lecture—Hosted by MWiB

Saturday 27th June, 7 – 9pm in Ludlow 1, Telford International Conference Centre

This year, we welcome **Rev'd Dr. Tessa Henry-Robinson** – a womanist practical theologian, Moderator of the Free Churches Group, and the first Black woman to serve as Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly. Under the theme "**The Authority of the Called: Women, Voice, and the Future of the Church**," Dr. Henry-Robinson will bring her internationally respected leadership and "real talk" to the intersection of faith and racial justice. By bridging rigorous scholarship with the courageous "Power and Purpose" of lived experience, this lecture challenges the Methodist Connexion to listen to marginalised voices and engage with global concerns. Join us for an evening of transformative wisdom and a call to action for the future of the Church.

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Newcastle upon Tyne District Retreat, Spring 2026



Our retreat took place across the last weekend of March at Minsteracres Passionists Monastery in beautiful countryside near Consett. We were told by our retreat secretary that we would be abundantly blessed in our time of praise, worship and sharing together. This became very clear as we were led through our programme, under the title, *'Unnamed but not unknown'* by local preacher, Alison McLeod, from our East Durham circuit.

Using paintings by Rembrandt and Sieger Koder as well as monologues and accounts from the Old and New Testaments, Alison guided us as we discovered more about the unnamed characters from familiar Bible stories.

We were challenged and surprised as well as sometimes being brought to tears or filled with laughter, as we learned more of the characters and, indeed, more about ourselves and our faith in our loving and forgiving God.

On our free afternoon some chose to go on a prayer walk, often prompted to pray blessings on so much of God's world, never forgetting the situations in the world. We hugged some of the magnificent trees which reminded us of the faithful souls who had walked the same paths we trod.



Some took the opportunity to get to know new friends and exchange news with old ones, while knitting or crocheting. Others prepared their sketches, poems, songs or stories for entertainment in the 'President's Hour'!

We returned home feeling richly blessed by our awesome God.

Judy Tasker

It wasn't quite Tea at the Ritz ...but

At Romsey Methodist church there was plenty of food – sandwiches, cheese scones, fruit scones, and cake, and more cake – most of which disappeared. Entertainment between course ranged from stories of the real Ritz, through amusing poems, and well loved songs, some solos, duets, and singalong songs from Sunnydays, a local singing group. Everyone was chatting, smiling and laughing the afternoon away.



Donations for the tea, and a small table of items realised £1,102 for The Honey Pot Children's Charity who support young carers between the ages of 5 and 12 across much of the southern part of the country providing respite care at Honey Pot house in the New Forest, and outings as well as family help. They also have a house in Wales and one in Scotland.

Our small group of Methodist Women in the Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit have partnered with them this church year and to date have raised in the region of £4000 for their work. We're nearly caked out!

Hilary Evans



Cumbria MWiB Spring Day, Tebay Methodist Church "New Meaning to Our Life & Faith"

On the 21/4/26 at Tebay MC, 21 ladies gathered together to learn and share with Methodist Women in Argentina, with whom we have developed strong links over 20+ years. The day was led by Joan Wager, who back in 2005 visited Argentina with a group from Cumbria, where strong bonds were forged, and several exchanges have taken place, including Femma leaders attending our District Conference in Grange in 2015, where we were greatly blessed. Links today continue via the internet- hence today!

After opening worship led by Rev Jackie Betts, a lively video was shown of Femma women sending greetings to us, knowing we were going to participate in 3 workshops that they had already engaged in. These being: 1) Ourselves & the Environment. 2) Ourselves & God. 3) Ourselves & Others.

Photos were taken & also displayed, one of particular interest being a lady wearing a headscarf, beautifully decorated with flowers & with the words **Nunka Mas /Never Again** prominent on it. This referred to the Coup of 50yrs ago where 30,000 people, many of them young, "Disappeared". Mothers of the "Missing" meet regularly in a square in Buenos Aires, bravely chanting in protest & remembrance of the lost. So we too created scarves in sympathy with them; made collage posters to highlight these wrongs, including climate change; wrote poems, prayers and letters in greeting, to send with love in Christ, as encouragement to our Femma sisters, as well as photos from our day together as shown here.





After lunch, we shared together the things we had created that morning, which were really quite amazing!

Joan emphasized how Bible study & prayer is Key to our Femma friends' strong Faith, & how privileged we are in England. Reinforcing this, she mentioned Ukrainian friends & invited an "unexpected" attendee to share her experience of a disappeared brother, now restored.

This certainly impacted/added to our day. Our closing worship in Scripture, Silence & Song, further blessed us, ending with the Benediction;

The Holy Spirit dances in the mystery of creation, delights in wisdom & justice.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LOVE.

Blessed with the friendship of God we go, living our lives in God's Love. Amen.

Delphine Gratrix

News about activities around the different Districts is always welcome for our newsletter and our website. Please send to communications.mwib@gmail.com

Dates for your Diaries

World Federation Day—Saturday 17th October 2026—venue tbc

MWiB Conference—9th—11th April 2027—at The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire

Swanwick Conference 2026

Where power meets purpose: Small acts that change the world

Keynote speaker—Carolyn Godfrey

This conference was enjoyed by over 190 women in April and what follows are snapshots, thoughts & reflections from some of them offering different points of view.



Sadly, some of the Northern Ladies shot off for lunch and missed being on the photo!

WHERE POWER MEETS PURPOSE: SMALL ACTS THAT CHANGE THE WORLD

Starting on Friday evening the meeting is held at a lovely Conference Centre in Derbyshire “The Hayes”. Attendees are representing their Methodist District and this year I was the only person to represent Yorkshire West.



MWiB has 2 Co Chairs; they co – ordained and led all the sessions, their names are Olive Ruvimbo Ruzvidzo and Leonora Wassell. Leonora is coming to Linthwaite on Sunday 18 October 2026 to lead Worship when we celebrate 80 years of the Thursday Fellowship.

The weekend programme includes a Keynote speaker, workshops, music, worship, Connexional business, good food and plenty of time to catch up with old friends and make new ones.

The guest speaker Carolyn Godfrey is a past Vice President of the Methodist Conference. She has worked in education and pastoral care with special emphasis on Safeguarding.

She told us that as Methodist women we hold power. We do not always have status – but the power also brings responsibility. With incidents from her own life – she made us all think hard about how we come across to other people. A simple question illustrates:

If the smallest action you took this week becomes the biggest story of someone else’s week – how would you choose to act next? Many people can recall a significant incident in their life from many years ago which has had a profound effect on their future.

There were 10 Saturday afternoon workshops to choose from. I chose “A Different way of praying” – quite helpful and “Bible texts as the writers intended you to read them” led by Rev David Palmer, starting with the Greek & Latin - this was way above my understanding.

Sunday morning was very thought provoking. Did you know that there are 69 different words in the Bible used to describe women? Words written by men - for men – and many not respectful. The Bible Study on Sunday morning led by Rev Jenny Pathmarajah asked the question “ Is the Bible a



handbook on how to abuse women?” She answered this with a detailed look at the Old Testament story of Samson and Delilah told in Judges chapters 13 to 16. This was followed by some Connexional news and then the last act of Worship. This was led by the 2 acting Chaplains for the weekend and Carolyn Godfrey was the preacher. 185 women took communion in an organised and dignified manner whilst Rev Jenny played and sang a beautiful ballad (Plowshare Prayer) that none of us had heard before. As you can imagine those same 185 women raised their singing voices loud and clear and the Conference ended on a high note. After Sunday lunch we said our farewells and hoped to attend again next year.

Lesley Baxter from Linthwaite Methodist Church

Report from the Swanwick Conference 2026

Three of us from Lancashire travelled to the annual MWiB Conference at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick. I have been attending these conferences for a good many years, yet it never fails to lift my heart as we arrive and meet old friends, and over the weekend meet new ones. Over 200 people came together on Friday evening after our evening meal in the main conference hall to be warmly welcomed by our Co-Chair Olive Ruzvidzo, who set the scene for the weekend by welcoming the speakers, newcomers and areas in her lovingly enthusiastic way.

Two Co-Chairs Olive and Leonora Wassall have shared the responsibility of leading MWiB forward, Leonora spoke of the wonderful time spent in this role, travelling abroad, and around the many districts in the UK, unfortunately due to ill health she sadly has had to resign from this role. Olive thanked Leonora for her enthusiasm and support during their time of working together.



We heard news from Alison Judd regarding the World Federation and the forthcoming Assembly in New Zealand in August this year. Alison spoke of her 5 years as World President and her second 5 years as President Emerita showing pictures of the wonderful women she had met worldwide when attending their events and conferences, expressing the love shown to her and God's grace in enabling her on her numerous journeys.

After evening devotions led by Olive there were late night options which included a Worship Disco, which was very popular. Led by Jenny Pathmarajah in a very sparkly dress it was very much enjoyed.

Saturday morning after breakfast our keynote speaker Carolyn Godfrey spoke on the title of the conference "Where Power meets Purpose: Small Acts that Change the World". Sharing a personal story where a small act of kindness changed for her a sad time into a time of calm normality, Carolyn spoke of the power we all hold as Methodist women to act kindly, listen and support people when situations arise. (As those of us who are pastoral visitors will know a bunch of flowers, a phone call, a friendly chat or listening ear can make a difference).

Carolyn who has been a safeguarding officer for 2 districts in the North East for 11 years said, 'When kindness is absent communities don't flourish and people don't feel safe'

That is only a snippet of her talk, it was so inspiring and moving in parts, I found I hadn't time to write notes as I was so enthralled in what she had to say.



In your group, you must invent a "Small Act" of mission or a community project using **all five items** found in the **"Mystery Bag"**

After coffee we played a game based on Dragons Den, only ours was called Solar Panel.



We were sat around circular tables, so that was your team, we had five items displayed on the screen, a rubber duck, packet of wild flower seeds, a clothes peg, tea bag, blank luggage label. The team had to choose a person who would present 'An Act of Mission' using these items to the panel within five minutes. A clock appeared on the screen and if you hadn't finished within the time you were off, great fun and so interesting hearing all the ideas. Including the Zoomers, there were 21 teams.

Saturday afternoon was a time for the workshops that had been chosen by us before we arrived, so people went off in various directions or spent a quiet time reading. Feedback from the workshop leaders was after the evening meal, followed by the Helen Kim Scholar Madeleine Reed who spoke of her five years as the HKMS. Maddie spoke movingly about the effect it had had on her life, as a young woman with autism and little confidence to a very confident, self assured young woman. Maddie is now a student at Cliff College. Evening devotions were led by Nina Rawlins a past treasurer for MWiB .

Sunday morning we were treated to an excellent Bible study by Jenny Pathmarajah, did we know that in the whole of the Bible only 8% are women, with 69 unnamed!

Her study from Judges chapters 14,15 &16 focused on the story of Samson and Delilah, This story contains, rape, domestic violence, coercion, anger, not unlike stories we hear from women today, the majority of us presumed that Delilah had cut off Sampson's hair to enable his strength to leave his body, read it again and you maybe surprised to find she didn't! I'll leave that with you.

To end our conference, after coffee we gathered again for a service led by our two chaplains and including Holy Communion. Carolyn Godfrey was the preacher.

We gathered for Sunday dinner before saying our farewells, with lots of hugs and wishing everyone safe journeys home.

For me who has been going to Swanwick for over 30 years it is still a great joy, we reunite with friends, and make new ones, to hear stories that inspire us, and be encouraged and blessed in so many ways. I hope this small window of our time there will inspire you to go, or encourage a women in your church to give it a go.

Blessings, Jennifer Jones x

Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) Annual Conference

What's this? MWiB is part of an international movement of faith, compassion and hope. Since its formation in 2011 it has strived to enable justice and transformation to the lives of those who are most in need across the world. Through advocacy, awareness, and solidarity, helping to bring about change.

The annual conference is held in Swanwick (Derbyshire) with representatives attending from numerous Districts – this year there were approximately 200 Christian ladies either attending in person or joining via Zoom. Our theme was “Where power meets purpose: small acts that change the World”. A few free places were offered via District and two apprehensive church members ‘volunteered’ to attend. Our worries were soon addressed as we were well looked after. Downfall was that everything went so quickly – from guest speaker, activities, the marketplace which was open throughout the conference, worship, and rousing hymn singing! Oh, and not to forget the good standard of accommodation, with nice clean rooms and plentiful choice of meals, plus bonus of daily free tea and coffee with water stations included.

How did the weekend shape-up? Friday evening started with the Conference gathering followed by opening devotions, a worship disco or circle dancing for the more energetic or just relaxing and chatting with friends. Saturday was a busy day, opening devotions followed by the guest speaker and then a group activity consisting of a version of Dragons Den – have to say our group came joint second! After lunch numerous workshops commenced; although we had pre-selected the same, we attended at different times. So, we joined Family History and Islamic Geometric Art; both were informative and entertaining. Following the evening meal, we gathered again to hear the organisational news, some presentations, feedback from the workshops, then closing devotions. Sunday morning presented a really interesting bible study, then a Holy Communion Service which offered a wonderful experience with our faith revived. There was a traditional Sunday lunch, then sadly we had to depart and say our fond goodbyes.



Overall, by the end of the weekend jaunt, we had found camaraderie with like-minded ladies – fun, worship, and skills we didn't know we had from the inspirational and often challenging workshops and group activities! We agreed the time had renewed our hope for the future, a sense that God is all around as we journey through life whatever comes our way. In turn giving us strength to help and support when we can.

Go again? We will definitely try to be there next April, wouldn't want to miss the opportunity of a lovely weekend. Thanks to all at MWiB for the chance to participate in a wonderful experience. *Christine Aspin and Helen Bailey (Manchester & Stockport)*

Methodist Women in Britain Conference 2026—Thoughts from a first time visitor

I wanted to share a few highlights from this conference. It is an annual event over a weekend and takes place in Swanwick in Derbyshire at The Hayes Christian Centre . The large Centre is set in beautiful grounds with comfortable accommodation, single rooms with ensuite and radiators that can be operated in the room!

The theme - “Where Power meets Purpose : Small Acts that Change the World” . The keynote speech was from Carolyn Godfrey, Vice President of the Methodist Conference in 2024/25 . Her message was about Safe Guarding, not the policy, but she used the theme to expand on the need to “safe guard” each other by being inclusive, caring congregations which she saw as being central to a growing church.



It was well organised with a full programme that included worship, workshops, games and disco dancing! The fun event was a skit on “Dragons Den”. 200 women were seated around tables of ten. Each table was asked to use five items – a clothes peg, luggage label, a duck, tea bags and a packet of wild flower seeds. We then had 30 minutes to come up with an idea to provide help to a community of our choice using all five items multiple times as wished. There was a positive buzz around the conference hall as we all worked within the time scale! The winner was a table who had used the “duck” as earrings and as a helium balloon with a Christian message! The main purpose of this fun exercise was to show how working together could be a positive creative experience which could lead to Mission.

I enjoyed the early prayer walk within the grounds using the natural elements to focus on God’s abundant love and our responsibility to care for our Planet. It was a joy to spend a weekend in the company of so many women but it was also a very positive, companionable experience just falling into step with one or two people, enjoying conversations, as I found my way to the various events. *Doreen Field, Chichester*



A net constructed during Carolyn’s talk reflecting how we can all work together with our small acts of kindness to provide safe and secure places for all, and showing the power we have when all our small acts are joined together

Naledi Phaladi, Liverpool: I would like to contribute a short report. Mine will be in a form of a poem. It goes like this:

Every year, in April, All roads leads to Swanwick

A place in Derbyshire, A place so cool, out in the countryside. Where each year they is a theme. This year's theme ,where Power meets Purpose, it reasonate so well, I learnt a lot. As we rise and shine ,we carry the power within. Mmm the biggest part taking part in the dragon's den presentations. On that line we stood not known who is first? mmm what a privilege. Timer and all. well done everyone. The challenge for problem solving the ducks, pegs .(the items for dragons den). Etc. The fellowship and different workshops taking place bringing people together. Different people from across Britain from mwib district. Thank you.



A

few words from Rev Annie Deche about the Swanwick Conference in April - *We were inspired and blessed during the Annual Conference at Swanwick. Carolyn Godfrey shared her story, and it led us to think about her topic, 'Where Power Meets Purpose: small acts that change the world. We need small acts of kindness and hope, and there is safety in small acts!*

As well as being one of our chaplains Barbara Easton shared reflections on her time as President of WFMUCW (Britain & Ireland) introducing Helen Cunningham who will take over from her as WFMUCW Vice President (Britain & Ireland) in August.

*A conference photograph reflecting our commitment to #Thursdays in Black
Towards a world without rape and violence*



Where Power meets Purpose: small acts that change the world- MWIB conference. 2026



This month 6 women from the Southampton District joined 200 women from Methodist Churches around the UK at the Methodist Women in Britain's conference in Swanwick, Derbyshire. Other women joined online.

We were reminded that **we** have the **Power** to show God's love both in small acts of kindness and compassion and to come together to have the Power to support projects around the world empowering women to develop their Christian ministry in their churches and communities.

The programme included worship, discos (the Friday night disco was so popular there was a mini disco at the end of the meeting on Saturday) talks and activities.

Together as Methodist Women of Britain we heard about the work of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Women with its conference in New Zealand this August. Over lunch talking to Louise Wilson, the WF World Secretary, we heard that the Vice President of the South Pacific Area is the Queen of Tonga and that the many women of Zimbabwe who want to attend the WF conference in New Zealand are having difficulty getting visas.

The Helen Kim Scholarship is awarded every 5 years to young women from Methodist Churches around the world. We heard from Madeline Reed who is coming to the end of her tenure and spoke about the transformative experience the scholarship had had on her life including making friends with Helen Kim scholars from around the world at a meeting in Brazil ..she started the Scholarship as a girl and leaves as a woman. Madeline is now studying at Cliff College. The next Helen Kim scholar from the UK for the Britain and Ireland Unit is a young woman, Izzy Solomon, who has just completed a Masters on AI. She will be talking at the Methodist Conference this year.



We played a version of Dragon's Den where each group had 25 minutes to create a mission plan using a bag of seeds, a yellow plastic duck, a clothes peg, a luggage label and a teabag. The team then had 5 minutes to present their plan. People who'd watched the Dragon's Den knew to ask for lots of money! It was good to hear ideas from the 20 groups and I was reminded that locally we have not welcomed people moving to new estates as we have in the past.

On Saturday afternoon we chose which activities we did & in the evening we heard about the activities: Singing old hymns to tunes from musicals, Prayer -sharing ideas of different ways people prayed, Circle dancing, Creating and painting an Islamic design, Learning about life in Palestine at the moment, and of the work of All You Can using a snakes & ladders game to learn of the frustrations of seeking aid for projects.

I enjoyed the Circle Dancing and being reminded of ways to approach prayer and being reminded that as we're all different we don't all approach prayer the same way. In the evening I was struck hearing about the All We Can Activity and wondered if we could share that with the local Church.

On Sunday morning we had a challenging Bible Study looking at the story of Samson in the Book of Judges from the points of view of Samson's wife and Delilah.

We ended our conference with Worship and Communion.

Although it is uplifting to be able to chat to Methodist women from around Britain, throughout the weekend there was the opportunity to have time alone in the beautiful ground of the Hayes Conference Centre or in our own bedrooms. A re-freshing break!

Elizabeth Robertson

Fund for Human Need at MWiB 2026



Another wonderful weekend of fellowship and learning at Swanwick with the ladies of Methodist Women in Britain. We were very impressed by the level of interest and engagement in both the Genealogy workshop and Bible study run by Gill and David. Working on stories and heritage both personal and biblical. Our market place stand Raised £298 including £84 as donations for David's study books. As many of you are aware we use 100% of our donations to make payments to those in desperate need every month, spending about £7000 per month, so this money has already been used. Please consider these thanks from recipients of May 2026 grants as representing the people you have all helped with your donations and purchases of cards.

'First of all, I would like to say thank you so much for your support to me. I have received £90 and I bought a cycle. I attached the picture of my nice cycle. With best regards, Thank you so much again. WF'



'Thank you very much indeed for this exceptionally good news and the generosity shown to our client A, especially as I know that funds for all charitable organisations are limited and demand is always very high. I look forward to sharing this with him, and I know that purchasing the small freezer will be a really great benefit to him and a way of supporting his independence and ability to look after himself living alone. On behalf of Clement James and A, many thanks once again.'

If you would like to hear more about how you or your group / church can help Fund for Human Need help those in need please contact Gill at Fundhumanneed@gmail.com or check out the website <https://fundforhumanneed.org.uk/> **Gill Mason Administrator**

LOVING THROUGH A BROKEN HEART WORKSHOP

Words of a Palestinian from Bethany working at St George's Cathedral with David Hardman.

The response to the workshop far exceeded my expectations but the ladies attending were prepared to engage and participate which meant that knowledge could be shared. In both groups the questions asked showed a real understanding and consideration of the situation in the West Bank Occupied Territories in the Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nabius and Hebron areas. The packs for each participant contained both historical as well as current up-to-date information, some only released by the President of the Methodist Conference during the preceding week.

The aim of the packs was not only to inform but to provide small ways which can make a difference: wearing a Palestinian Flag lapel pin or bracelet, not shopping from certain companies or brands, showing friends & family the small Christmas decorations to show the skill or wearing a white peace poppy.

We also listened to the most beautiful song, sung by a young Palestinian Christian woman. The words are so meaningful. 'The Colors of our Soul' is an adaptation of 'Colors of the Wind' from Pocahontas. One line says: "The Muslims and the Jews they are my brothers." A message for us all here in the UK and throughout the world.

Thank you to everyone who attended the workshops and I pray you are able to put some of the 'small things' into practice every day.

GIFTS OF GRACE STALL

A huge 'THANK YOU' to everyone who made a purchase. In total, including donations we took £1005. The stall helps support Palestinian crafts people with Olive Wood carvings from Bethlehem, Cashmere shawls from East Jerusalem, Glass and Kafirs from Hebron, Dead Sea toiletries and Olive Oil. These sales are so important as it provides income for families who have no tourists or pilgrims to sell to.

Many Palestinians are having to work for the Israeli Government and are even manufacturing the gates which have been installed in the West Bank towns preventing Palestinians moving around in freedom. The alternative can be to suffer starvation as they have no money. Since 7th Oct. 2023 the tourism industry has been non-existent. Most of the items sold make beautiful unique gifts and I would be pleased to have a stall at any event in your local area. If you would like a stall, or a talk, please email me catherinetaylor3@sky.com I can't thank you enough for the support you gave to the Palestinian people. God Bless You All **Cathy Taylor**



A shared mission, a lasting impact

Action for Children was delighted to be at the MWIB Residential again, reconnecting with longstanding supporters and meeting new faces. It was a joy to hear how individuals and churches have faithfully supported our work over many years.

We used our service finder tool to highlight where we work in the UK—demonstrating the real impact of your generosity. These conversations were a powerful reminder that behind every donation, prayer and act of support are children and families whose lives are being changed.

Kirsty Burnham, attending for the first time reflected:

“What struck me immediately was the incredible support and sense of camaraderie... everyone was open, kind, and eager to share their stories. At Action for Children, we describe ourselves as a family, united by love and a shared purpose—and I felt that same love and passion reflected throughout the conference.”



This sense of shared purpose lies at the heart of our partnership with the Methodist Church. Thanks to your support, we are reaching more children than ever. This year, we've opened new homes for children with complex needs and continue to invest in services that provide safe, stable care and vital emotional wellbeing support.

Join us to celebrate our partnership on Action for Children Sunday (12 July or a date that suits you); it's a reminder of the incredible impact we make together.

Visit actionforchildren.uk/faithFR for information.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Together, we are helping to give every child the safe and happy childhood they deserve.

Karis Kolawole *Faith Partnerships Lead Action for Children*

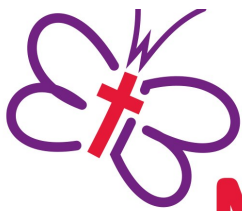
Did you know that a small gift in your will can have a huge impact?

After looking after your loved ones, please consider leaving a gift to 'Methodist Women in Britain'.

A gift of any size can help change lives and make a massive difference through our Grants and Gifts programme.

Visit our website, 'Methodist Women in Britain' or contact our finance officer at finance.mwib@gmail.com for further information.





MWiB

Are you a "People Person" with a passion for Justice?

Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) is a vibrant, volunteer-run charity, and we know that our greatest strength lies in our people. We are seeking a **Trustee Lead for People and Volunteering** to be the heart of our volunteer culture, ensuring every person who serves with us feels supported, safe and empowered.

This is a **5-year volunteer appointment** and a brand-new role, offering you the unique opportunity to shape how we recruit, mentor and care for our community of District Ambassadors.

How you will make a difference:

- **Champion our Culture:** You'll lead our volunteering strategy, fostering a culture that is inclusive, values-driven and supportive.
- **The "Bridge" to Districts:** You will be the primary point of contact for our District Ambassadors, providing the peer support and mentoring they need to thrive.
- **Safer Recruitment:** You'll ensure our "safer recruitment" practices are robust, fair, and legally sound.
- **Policy and Protection:** Working with the Trustee Lead for Safeguarding, you'll develop the policies that keep our movement a safe space for all.

What We're Looking For:

- **Human Resource experience:** Have a background in strategic people management or human resources.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Be a natural communicator who can provide both constructive support, gentle challenge and work collaboratively.
- **Integrity and Discretion:** Handle sensitive situations with impartial judgment and a commitment to safeguarding.
- **A Heart for Volunteering:** Understand the joys and challenges of a fully volunteer-run organisation.

Why Join Us?

You won't just be "managing volunteers"; you will be equipping women to change their communities. By ensuring our charity is safe, fair and inclusive, you allow our mission for women, for justice and Christ to flourish.

Ready to help us lead the way? Application Deadline: Sunday 21st June 2026

Interview on zoom: week beginning 6th July 2026

For more information contact the Governance Committee at governance.mwib@gmail.com using the subject "*Recruitment – People and Volunteering*"



Love a Great Event? Help Us Set the Stage for Something Amazing!

Do you believe that the best way to change the world is to get the right people in the right room (or on the right Zoom)? **Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB)** is looking for a **Trustee Lead for Events** to be the creative and strategic spark behind our national gatherings.

This is a **5-year volunteer role** for someone who knows that a truly "Spirit-filled" event also needs a great risk assessment and a balanced budget!

Your Mission (Should you choose to accept it):

- **The Visionary:** Oversee our overarching events strategy.
- **The Venue:** From scouting the perfect residential spot to liaising with venues, you're the one who makes sure the "where" is as good as the "why."
- **Safety:** You'll partner with our Trustee Lead for Safeguarding to make sure every event is a safe, inclusive haven.
- **The Team Captain:** You'll chair our Event Task Groups working collaboratively with a team of volunteers to bring the details to life.

What We're Looking For:

- **Event Expertise:** Experience of ~~organising~~ and overseeing events (whether in a professional or voluntary capacity).
- **Organisational Mastery:** A leader who understands risk management and the logistics of making things happen.
- **Strategic Thinker:** Comfortable contributing at Trustee board level, looking at how events impact our long-term mission and reputation.
- **Collaborative Heart:** Enjoy working in a fully volunteer-led environment where partnership is key.

Why MWiB?

Our events aren't just dates on a calendar—they are where women find their voice, where justice finds its feet, and where Christ's love finds a community. If you love hospitality, organisation, and making things happen, you'll fit right in.

MWiB: For women, for justice, for Christ. (And for really great events!)

Ready to help us lead the way? **Application Deadline: Sunday 21st June 2026**

Interview on zoom: week beginning 6th July 2026

For more information contact the Governance Committee at governance.mwib@gmail.com using the subject "**Recruitment – Events**"



MWiB

Are you the "Anchor" our Governance needs?

Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) is evolving, and we are looking for a meticulous, strategic-minded **Trustee Lead for Governance Administration** to help secure our future.

As we ~~reorganise~~ reorganise to ensure a sustainable future, which remains legally compliant, this new statutory role is vital. You will be the "guardian of the records," ensuring our Board of Trustees functions with transparency, integrity, and excellence.

How you will make a difference:

- **Governance Excellence:** You'll lead the way in board procedures—managing agendas, keeping objective minutes, and ensuring our "Governance Register" is beyond reproach.
- **Statutory Oversight:** You'll keep our records sharp, tracking trustee terms of office and declarations of interest to ensure we remain fully compliant with the Charity Commission.
- **Strategic Hub:** Act as the central point for Board communications, making sure policy reviews and the annual governance cycle happen like clockwork.
- **Data Guardian:** You will be the champion of GDPR and Data Protection, ensuring our board records are handled with the highest standards of confidentiality.

What We're Looking For:

- **Organisational Mastery:** An eye for detail and high proficiency in digital document management.
- **Professional Integrity:** Handle sensitive information with discretion and impartiality.
- **A Heart for Service:** An understanding of charity governance (or a real willingness to learn) and a commitment to MWiB's mission.

Why Join Us?

In this role, you aren't just "doing paperwork"—you are providing the framework that allows our charity to change lives. Your work ensures that MWiB remains safe, legal, and ready to empower women for years to come.

Ready to help us lead the way? Application Deadline: Sunday 21st June 2026

Interview on zoom: week beginning 6th July 2026

For more information contact the Governance Committee at governance.mwib@gmail.com using the subject "**Recruitment – Governance Administration**"

Contact us: PLEASE USE THESE EMAIL ADDRESSES

MWiB Co-chairs: Leonora Wassell and Olive Ruzvidzo— cochairs.mwib@gmail.com

If your contact is person specific please put Leonora or Olive in the subject line

Finance Officer: Sheila Hall - finance.mwib@gmail.com

Communications Officer: Bronwen Braidell - communications.mwib@gmail.com

Digital Media Coordinator: Ruth Dawson - media.mwib@gmail.com

MWiB Resources : Caroline Fillery - resources.mwib@gmail.com

WFM&UCW Officer: Barbara Easton - britainireland.president@wfmucw.org

Helen Kim Memorial Scholar: Madeleine Reed— hkms.mwib@gmail.com

General enquiries: 0300 030 9873

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

Website: www.mwib.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1156626 Methodist Women in Britain

Find us on Facebook, Instagram & YouTube

Use the QR code to access our website



MWiB Area Trustees

East Anglia and Lincolnshire - Rita Rowe

Scotland and Shetland - Barbara Harrison

Cornwall, Plymouth & Exeter (SW Peninsular) -

Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury, Birmingham and Mid Wales - Jenny Parnell

London, Beds Essex & Herts, South East—Annah Mwadiwa

Yorkshire North & East, Yorkshire West and Sheffield -Janice Clark

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Notts & Derby and Northampton - Menesia Chikazi

Bolton & Rochdale and Lancashire - Philippa Hill

Liverpool, Chester & Stoke, North Wales, Manchester & Stockport - Chris Thompson

Bristol & South Wales - Gillian Pengelly

Southampton & Channel Islands - Liz Chick

Trustee meetings: 14th September Zoom; 9-11 October tbc

Please use communications.mwib@gmail.com initially to make contact with your Area Trustee.