

## President's Letter

I'd like to start by saying I've never written a President's Letter before and still assume it's someone else! Although full of trepidation at each new task I'm also in awe at all the help and encouragement I have received along the way. My first big thank you must be to Liz Stuart who has not only been an excellent President but a huge help to me over the last 4 months, always available to answer my many queries. Liz has also, through Covid, undertaken an extra year's Presidency! Well done Liz. In addition I must thank all the MWiB District Officers who are ever there with helpful advice and suggestions, I feel my church family has truly been extended now.

I so enjoyed my Induction on June 19<sup>th</sup> although saddened that we were restricted in numbers due to Covid. It was a lovely, joyous occasion and for the many who were not allowed to attend I hope you watched it on YouTube – another first for MWiB I think!

For many of us we are beginning to feel the first stirrings of hope as our world slowly returns to something like 'normal'. The normal of hugging our families, the normal of attending church services, the normal of going out for a meal or enjoying mooching around the shops/having our hair done. What is your 'normal'? I think one thing Covid has taught us is to appreciate our 'normal' we took so much for granted before. As my mother always said, "Count your blessings and thank God for them, Christine."

Coming back to that word Hope, it is my theme for my President's time. I chose this because of my time in Palestine in 2019 and volunteering there in 2020. As many of you know I met inspirational Palestinians who, despite much adversity, had prayerful hope in their hearts. As St Paul writes in Romans 15 v 13: 'May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.'

This Bible verse truly sums up many Palestinians way of living in their very troubled country. For this reason I've chosen The Four Homes of Mercy in Bethany, Palestine as my charity during my time as President. They are the first charity in Palestine to offer a loving home and 24/7 care for people with special needs.

If any of you would like me to come to your churches and speak about my charity and the time I spent in the Holy Land, please get in touch. (07975 503019 or email [chrisg7684@gmail.com](mailto:chrisg7684@gmail.com))

God bless  
Chris Gregory



## Report from our Autumn District Meeting    Roberta Gerrard writes:

I attended the autumn meeting at St Mary's Church in Handforth; it was lovely to meet up with the ladies in person. As with all good meetings we started with a drink and a catch up chat. The business part of the meeting led to good discussions on the way forward following the lockdown. We had brought our lunch with us and again the room filled with lively chatter, and it took a while to persuade everyone to move into the church to begin the afternoon session. Our speaker was Beverley Blackley who had very kindly travelled from Newcastle on Tyne to join us. She told us of her time in Palestine volunteering at the "Four homes", and informing us about the difficult times the Palestinian people suffer because of the wall built by the Israeli's. A retiring collection will go the "Four homes" at the request of Chris Gregory our District President.

## MWiB Forum Report, October 2021

What an exciting and challenging time at Forum as we met together at Swanwick Conference Centre to review the past 10 years of MWiB and look to the future. This short review will only be a taster of what we have achieved and of what we want to happen in the future but we look forward with faith and hope.

I strongly recommend that you read a copy of the 'Annual Review, celebrating 10 years of MWiB'. We go on evolving and must continue to make progress as a significant movement within Methodism. If you have a problem obtaining a copy please contact me.

During the past year we have been able to give grants from our Emergency Support Fund to many worthwhile causes and projects and have been fortunate to receive legacies and donations.

We look to the future and ask the question: What next?

How do we adjust and adapt to change? Our congregations are getting smaller with less people offering for Ministerial training and districts are likely to become fewer and larger. The overall demographic is 60 plus or under 20's. We have to ask tough questions: how can we enlarge our 'reach' and do we need to change as an organisation? Awareness of MWiB is quite poor and we need a stronger voice in Methodism but must be clear what we stand for.

We had a time of group discussions and came up with the following issues about the involvement of younger women in MWiB:

- How do we proactively do more to support younger women.
- Consider diversity.
- What should be our focus for the next 3 to 5 years.
- Do we always need committees and presidents
- How can we increase our experiences with younger women and what is important to them.

We felt that all age groups are concerned about climate change, issues around gender equality, mental and physical health and the appalling abuse of women which is ongoing but became more apparent during lockdown. Plenty of food for thought and for discussion!

Jo Richards

## MWiB News Update

- There is a display at Epworth, 'Women in history' which is well worth a visit.
- Easter Offering Service 2022: 'Tell her Story', order forms are available and resources can be obtained from [www.methodistpublishing.org.uk/features/easter-offering-2022](http://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk/features/easter-offering-2022)
- Dementia packs have been updated, loose leaf in a folder with more visual aids and soon to be available.
- World Day of Prayer, March 4<sup>th</sup> '22 'I know the plans I have for you'. There will be a Service at Westminster Central Hall.
- Swanwick Residential Conference, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 will be offering 200 places. It will be led by Jill Baker and Fiona Kendall. It may be hybrid with on line access. Decision made nearer the time depending on circumstances.

## World Day of Prayer

2022 is a special year for WDP in England, Wales and Northern Ireland as it is the year we have prepared the service.

We celebrate our diversity and the contribution made to our countries by the many groups and individuals who have made their home here.

We use the Bible text “I know the plans I have for you” from Jeremiah to reflect on some of the issues facing us today. Poverty, domestic abuse and disability, finding hope in difficult situations and encouragement in the help we can give to each other.

**HOPE** is very appropriate for this time, when the world is coming to terms with the ongoing risks of a pandemic and the looming climate crisis.

The WDP is always on the first Friday in March.

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022 services will take place beginning in Samoa and moving on through New Zealand and Australia, across Asia, Africa and Europe and finally the United States and South America, before finishing in American Samoa.

Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland services will take place in large urban centres such as Central Hall, Westminster and in remote village churches.

For further information and resources, together with details and locations of services in your area see the WDP website: [www.wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk)

Lynette Brocklehurst.

