

'A New Vision for a sustainable future'

A report from Alison Judd, World President WFMUCW

When we made the decision to postpone our 14th World Assembly for a year, we recognised that 2021 could feel like a long 'fallow' year of separation, isolation and waiting. It could also provide an opportunity to bring Federation women together virtually, and to gain experience of organising a global online event in case the pandemic prevented us from meeting physically in 2022.

The aim of the two day event was to celebrate God's activity through the women of the Federation, and to focus on our response to the current climate crisis, which became ever more urgent as the months passed.

Work started early and the theme was chosen to reflect the biblical texts of Revelation 21:1-5 and 22: 1-5 as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 Climate Action.

World and Area Officers and Helen Kim Memorial Scholars were invited to contribute news items, biblical reflections, music and prayers. The goal was to include something from every geographical Area of our Federation and to involve as many young women as possible in this global event.

A member of the Connexional team of the Methodist Church in Britain recommended P H Productions as a company that had provided technical support for the Methodist Conference in 2020. I approached them and a contract was signed. They provided excellent support throughout, editing items that we uploaded to their drop box, training both myself and the team of interpreters we engaged for 7 languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese Mandarin, Korean and Cambodian). Many of these were professional interpreters, well used to working with the World Methodist Council, but few had much experience of working online for such an event as ours. An almost full script and access to unscripted videos were made available to all interpreters before the event began. This aid to preparation was much appreciated, as some contributors spoke rather fast!

Registration was organised by Rachel Allison, who was already experienced in using Eventbrite. She also recruited a small team of other Helen Kim Memorial Scholars to monitor the chat box and Q and A messages that flowed as soon as the Zoom Webinar event began. Around 900 registered as attendees, but some watched in groups viewing one screen. Those who were due to speak live, interpret or monitor the chat box were invited to join via a special link for panellists. P H Productions ran a training session for these individuals the day before the Webinar.

The programme for the event was posted on our website and Facebook and twitter a few days beforehand. An evaluation form was sent out via Eventbrite afterwards and the recordings of both days uploaded to our brand new Youtube.com/WFMUCW. Important news from our World Officers was announced on Day One. Speakers on Day Two included Jo Swinney from A Rocha International, Liz Lee from United Methodist Women, Mollie, Irene and Jessica, Climate ambassadors with 'Climate Justice for All', and Hilary Evans from Methodist Women in Britain. The technicians ensured the live speakers, powerpoint slides and videos all occurred in the correct order and the programme proceeded smoothly. One technician was assigned to support the interpreters throughout the event, helping teams of two for each language to work effectively.

A copyright licence was obtained for use of hymns and the appropriate acknowledgements included in PowerPoint slides. Interpreters were invited to send in their invoices promptly and were generous in their charges, recognising we are a non-profit organisation run by volunteers with a limited budget. We were extremely grateful to the British Methodist Church for their grant towards our costs for providing interpretation. I extend my heartfelt thanks to ALL who contributed to this ground-breaking event. Every blessing, Alison

