



World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women
In special consultative status with the United Nations



Joint European Area Report to the European Methodist Council
September 2020

The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women has 2 Areas in Europe:

Europe – Britain and Ireland Area

- Area President – Louise Wilson (Ireland)
- Area Vice President – Carolyn Lawrence (Britain)
- 2 Units: Britain and Ireland

Europe Continental Area

- Area President – Lidia Ribet (Italy)
- Area Vice President – Lilla Lakatos (Hungary)
- 20 Units from 21 countries

WORLD OFFICERS:

- World President: Alison Judd (Britain)
- World Vice President: Matilda Johnson (The Gambia)
- World Secretary: Mataiva Robertson (New Zealand)

- World Treasurer: Leu Pupulu (New Zealand)
- World President Emerita: Ann Connan (Australia)

EMBLEM AND MOTTO:

The tree of life is the official emblem of the World Federation, taken from Revelation 22:2: *“On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”*

Our motto, or mission statement is, *To Know Christ and To Make Him Known.*

THE ‘TREE OF LIFE’ MAGAZINE:

This quarterly publication is distributed electronically and is available from the website (www.wfmucw.org).

THEME FOR QUINQUENNIAL 2016 – 2021:

The theme for this quinquennium is *‘Chosen People Called To Proclaim’* . . . based on 1 Peter 2:9-10. At the 13th World Assembly in Houston, Texas in 2016 we were challenged, *‘To Proclaim’* through our . . . Worship . . . Relationships . . . Social Action.

14th WORLD ASSEMBLY

The World Assembly is held every five years and the next was scheduled for August 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting countries in all nine Areas of the Federation, this has been postponed and will now take place from 2nd – 7th August 2022. As originally planned, the venue will be Gothia Towers Hotel and Congress Centre, Gothenburg, Sweden and the theme is, *‘Go and bear fruit – fruit that will last’* based on John 15:16. The logo for the Assembly will be launched through the next issue of the *‘Tree of Life’* magazine in September 2020. The World Officers and the Local Arrangements Committee are continuing to meet and plan via Zoom. We are indebted to the Methodist Church in Britain for a grant to assist with interpretation for the Assembly. If it is still not possible to meet together in August 2022, we will hold the Assembly via Zoom.

In the meantime, a two-day online event is planned for August 2021, giving women of the Federation an opportunity to pray together and worship our God, who makes *'all things new,'* while also thinking about the UN Sustainable Development Goals that relate to the climate and the environment.

THURSDAYS IN BLACK:

While for many of us being 'forced' to stay at home during 'lockdown' has enabled us to grow closer to those with whom we share that home, for others home is not a safe or happy place, and the numbers of women and children suffering abuse and violence, not just in Europe, but globally, has more than doubled during this pandemic. Along with many of our sisters and brothers around the world, including the World Methodist Council, the women of the Federation have made the pledge **not to be silent** about gender-based violence. On Thursdays we wear black, we pause, remember, and pray, as a global act of resistance, accompaniment, and solidarity for an end to rape and all forms of gender-based violence. We invite you to join us in making this pledge.

AREA NEWS:

There has seldom been a time when the 'Tree of Life' emblem of the Federation has been more pertinent: *"And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."* While church buildings have closed and women's groups are not meeting together, the stories of women throughout Europe supporting each other and their local communities are too many to recount in this report. Women have for many years been actively involved in a variety of social action projects and initiatives, such as: foodbanks; outreach centres, parent & toddler groups; carer support groups; and women's refuges. Now, at this time when many people are losing their jobs and even their homes, and many are struggling to feed themselves and their families, our women have been among those working tirelessly to offer help and support.

Every four years sisters from central Europe meet in a different country, as part of a project sustained by the Central Conference. Fortunately they were able to meet in Budapest, Hungary in October 2019. Mrs. Wendy Johnston, a Biblical Storyteller from Ireland, presented a study of various passages of the Bible. The Unit President of Central Europe met with the women to discuss the problems facing the Methodist Church and the Uniting Churches. These problems will be discussed during the next General Conference.

Final word from Carolyn Lawrence,

Britain & Ireland Area Vice President and Vice President of the Methodist Church in Britain:

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." (Isaiah 43:18–19) Stand with us in believing that God's purposes will not be thwarted despite the peculiar way things have turned out, and that we will indeed witness God doing a new thing amongst us and see those streams in the wasteland bringing life, strength, healing and wholeness wherever they flow.

Louise Wilson
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Lidia Ribet
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