

Memorial service Thursday, 1 September 2016 (which follows reports re. Archives, Tree of Life, Website)

Introduction: In this Memorial service of the quinquennium when we have celebrated '75 years of healing leaves', we come to give thanks for the women of our movement who have contributed so much to our aim 'to know Christ and to make him known' and have now gone through death to share in his resurrection life. 'The saying is sure: "if we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him."' (2 Timothy 2:11-12, NRSV)

Call to worship: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.' (Ephesians 1:3-4, NRSV)

Hymn There is a line of women

1. There is a line of women, extending back to Eve,
Whose role in shaping history God only could conceive.
And though, through endless ages, their witness was repressed,
God valued and encouraged them through whom the world was blessed.

So sing a song of Sarah to laughter she gave birth;
And sing a song of Tamar who stood for women's worth;
And sing a song of Hannah who bargained with her Lord;
And sing a song of Mary who bore and bred God's Word.

2. There is a line of women who took on powerful men,
Defying laws and scruples to let life live again.
And though, despite their triumph, their stories stayed untold
God kept their number growing, creative, strong and bold.

So sing a song of Shiprah with Puah at her hand,
Engaged to kill male children they foiled the king's command.
And sing a song of Rahab who sheltered spies and lied;
And sing a song of Esther, preventing genocide.

3. There is a line of women who stood by Jesus' side,
Who housed him while he ministered and held him when he died.
And though they claimed he'd risen their news was deemed suspect
Till Jesus stood among them, his womanly elect.

So sing a song of Anna who saw Christ's infant face;
And sing a song of Martha who gave him food and space;
And sing of all the Marys who heeded his requests,
And now at heaven's banquet are Jesus' fondest guests.

(From "One is the body" © 2002 WGRG, Iona Community)

Text. John L. Bell; Sung to the tune of "The seven joys of Mary": Singing the Faith 687)

Leader: We follow in a line of women stretching back 2,000 years who have 'known Christ and made him known'. As the leaves of the tree fall to the ground and provide nourishment for the plant, so those World Federation 'sisters' who have died still energise us to continue the task of 'making Christ known.'

Prayer: Eternal God,

We remember today those of our movement who have died since last we met in a World Assembly.

We praise you for their commitment, witness and service that has brought glory and honour to your name.

We thank you that as they shared their knowledge of Jesus Christ, others were able to experience your healing grace.

We praise you that as they trusted in your promises, they each brought hope to others.

In the name of Christ who is our hope. **Amen**

Tributes: *Names will be read out of those leading members of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women who have died during the last five years. A paper leaf bearing each name will be placed under the 'tree' or on the display. A sentence or two about each person may be written on the leaf and read out as a tribute.*

1. World Officers
2. Southern and East Africa Area
3. West Africa Area
4. Latin America Area
5. North America Area
6. East Asia Area
7. South Asia Area
8. Europe: Britain and Ireland Area
9. Europe: Continental Area
10. South Pacific Area

Some moments of silent reflection

Hymn Singing the Faith 746 For all the saints

1. For all the saints who showed your love
in how they lived and where they moved,
for mindful women, caring men,
accept our gratitude again.

2. For all the saints who loved your name,
whose faith increased the Saviour's fame,
who sang your songs and shared your word,
accept our gratitude, good Lord.

3. For all the saints who named your will,
and saw your kingdom coming still
through selfless protest, prayer and praise,
accept the gratitude we raise.

4. Bless all whose will or name or love
reflects the grace of heaven above.
Though unacclaimed by earthly powers,
your life through theirs has hallowed ours.

John Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

Readings: Revelation 21:1-5a; John 11:17-27;

Sermon: Emmy Lou (10-15 minutes)

Hymn Give thanks for life (Tune 'For all the saints' StF 745 SINE NOMINE Words © Shirley Murray)

Give thanks for life,
the measure of our days,
mortal, we pass through
beauty that decays,
yet sing to God our hope,
our love, our praise,

Alleluia!

Give thanks for those
who made their life a light
caught from the Christ-flame,
bursting through the night,
who touched the truth, who
burned for what is right,

Alleluia!

And for our own, our living
and our dead,
thanks for the love by
which our life is fed,
a love not changed by time
or death or dread,

Alleluia!

Give thanks for hope,
that like the wheat, the grain
lying in darkness
does its life retain,
in resurrection
to grow green again.

Alleluia!

Prayers of thanksgiving:

Eternal God, we do indeed give thanks today for all those we have named, publicly or in the quietness of our hearts, who have been our example and our inspiration as mothers and sisters in the World Federation and who have now gone before us into glory. Gracious God, **we thank you.**

We thank you for the many ways in which these women knew Christ and made Him known. We are grateful for their witness to your love and their commitment to the work of our global movement. We marvel at their perseverance and courage. Gracious God, **we thank you.**

We rejoice that we share their belief in the resurrection and the promise of eternal life through faith in Jesus; that it is by grace that we are given hope of victory in the face of death. We thank you that we too are chosen and called to proclaim this glorious truth. Gracious God, **we thank you.**

In the name of Christ. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer (*in your own preferred language*)

StF 503 Love Divine, all loves excelling (Tune: Blaenwern)

Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley

Closing prayer:

As we respond to His call,
**let us go in the power of the Holy Spirit,
and in the knowledge of Christ our Lord,
inspired by the crowd of witnesses who have gone before us,
to proclaim the one true God. Amen**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us and all those whom we love, this day and for evermore. Amen.