

Irish Unit - Chosen People Called to Proclaim.

In September 2016 six MWI ladies travelled to Houston, Texas to attend the World Assembly. We returned home to report to our branches on the theme "Chosen People Called to Proclaim." We had a wonderful time of fellowship, learning more about the Methodist Church worldwide, renewing acquaintances, making new friends, and having fun together in Houston.

Two weeks later the MWI held their bi-annual weekend in Glenada Holiday Centre, Newcastle, Co. Down, where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea. This got the ladies off on a flying start to the new church year. Eighty seven ladies were inspired to examine their lives from the "Inside Out." We were blessed by the presence of a few ladies from the Methodist Women in Britain who joined us for the weekend.

Worship

Several of the ladies have used the theme Chosen People Called to Proclaim when conducting worship. Our aim to Know Christ and make Him Known fits in perfectly with the theme. As chosen people we are God's messengers in our corner of the world, and it is our duty to obey the Great Commission. This passage can be used time and again to bring the same message in a different meaningful way. It is as relevant today as it was when written centuries ago. Our daily lives are made up of many brief encounters in queues, on public transport, and in coffee shops: most are short moments in time. A smile, a friendly hello, or a gracious word can show God's love to a hurting world. As chosen people called to proclaim so do not dismiss these short interludes as unimportant but use them as divine moments designed to proclaim the good news. The Area Seminar will cover the theme in Bible Studies and Workshops.

Social Action

From 2016 – 2021 our area is focusing on the United Nations Sustainable Goals: SDG 4 – Quality Education; SDG 5 – Gender Equality; and SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities. Over these 5 years we are introducing projects which will involve raising awareness as well as funds. During one of our Forum meetings we welcomed a speaker who gave us a presentation on the work of Woman's Aid. This prompted our Treasurer to visit her local centre in the South of Ireland and give a donation from the MWI. Other branches have been involved in this too. Across Ireland MWI members have continued to make generous contributions to World Mission through Easter Offerings and Mission Boxes. A small donation was made to "Play it by Ear," a group of young people who dramatize biblical passages, bringing the gospel to churched and unchurched people. Throughout the year money continued to come in for the Wings of Hope Lanka project in Sri Lanka. This was a two year project to help families in Kudaoya, a very poor area, get a water supply and tuition on health and caring for families. The current President's project was to raise funds for the Joint Area Seminar, which is to be held in Belfast, in June 2018. We have planned a programme covering Bible Studies and workshops to explain the goals, and inspire all who attend to become involved and support their specific projects. We have raised sufficient funds to keep the cost down, and to make an impact on the number of ladies from Europe, who would not be able to attend to do so. In September we will be starting an overseas project with CMWA in Myanmar (Burma). Three members of MWI visited Myanmar to conduct a two day training and visit projects sponsored by the Methodist Church in Ireland. The MWI President attended an Irish Council of Churches Conference on the homeless. She was so moved by the speaker that

we have agreed next session to highlight the position, and lobby politicians, to take action to help resolve the situation. Some of our members are involved in street pastoring at the weekends, working with party goers, alcoholics and the homeless. "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, therefore ask the Lord to send out workers" Matthew 9:37.

Relationships

The Irish Unit is very conscious of the Methodist motto, "A friend to all and an enemy of none." The Executive Officers visited all the districts and have a good relationship with each other. Over the last years we have worked closer with the Methodist Women in Britain by attending their World Mission Conferences in Swanwick, and the MWIB weekends. They in turn have attended our events. We value the friendships made through the World Federation, and try to keep up to date with world events through the Tree of Life, and social media. You will see from the Social Action we have developed a close relationship with the CMWA ladies of Myanmar and pray that it can be extended in the years to come. The Irish President has been involved with the Church in Sri Lanka for a long time and regularly prays for the work there and updates both Units on the current situation in both islands.

In September 2018, we will again have the bi-annual weekend, and we pray that we will welcome some new faces.

"A new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you." John 13:34. By this all people will know you are my disciples. As His disciples, His Chosen People may we proclaim His name and make it known.

Elizabeth McWatters

(MWI President)