

## MWA HOME AND OVERSEAS PAPER- OCTOBER 2022

### THE UNITY WOMEN'S DESK (UWD)

The Unity Women's Desk was established in 2011 to address the needs of women in the Moravian Church around the world. Its formation fulfilled Unity Synod resolutions made in 2002 and 2009.

Perhaps there are some among you who do not understand the term "The Unity". This term describes the worldwide Moravian Church and comes from its Latin name "Unitas Fratrum" or Unity of the Brethren. These days we should probably, more accurately say Unity of the Brothers and Sisters.

A good description of the purpose of the Unity Women's Desk can be found in the book edited by Peter Vogt called "Our Moravian Treasures."

*"The purpose of the Unity Women's desk is the coordination of the resources of Moravian women (spiritual, financial, intellectual, and material) around the world at the congregational level to affect global change by bringing the objectives of women to the attention of the worldwide Unity and by celebrating women's successes"*

The current co-ordinator of the UWD is Sr Julie Tomberlin who is based in Winston-Salem in the Southern Province (America South) of the Moravian Church. There is an Advisory Board of four Sisters who represent four regions of the Unity. The four regions are: Europe, Africa, North America and Caribbean/Latin America. The Advisory Board meets at least four times a year to discuss and provide finances for a variety of projects concerning women.

There are six main strands to the work of the UWD:

1. Education for Girls and Women
2. End Violence Against Women
3. Increase access to Health
4. Overcome Poverty/Entrepreneurship
5. Parenting for Justice
6. Women in Ministry

The UWD provides financial support for young women and girls who wish to continue with their education. The MWA has recently supported an initiative to keep Masai girls in school so that they receive an education and in so doing avoid forced marriage. UWD has also funded educational programmes in Albania and Malawi around empowering women and it provides microloans to women who wish to set up in business.

As those of you who attended the recent European Women's Conference will know, I have been chosen to represent Europe on the UWD Advisory Board. The European Region covers the British, European Continental, Czech and Czech Mission province as well as the South Asian Mission Area (India, Myanmar and Nepal). I hope to

make contact with Sisters in all of these areas to discover what the UWD can do to assist Sisters living in these places.

I attended my first meeting at the beginning of September and I can see that there is a very steep learning curve ahead! Of course, I am there to represent all Sisters not just those of you who are members of MWA – but I feel that telling you all about the work of the UWD is a good start!

There is a website you can look at for more information: [www.unitywomensdesk.org](http://www.unitywomensdesk.org). Sr Julie Tomberlin produces a monthly newsletter which I am happy to pass onto those of you who would like it – it comes by email and if you would like to receive it, please send me your email address.

I hope you feel you can support the UWD by praying for all who work on it and the by praying about the issues it seeks to address.

Yours in Christ

Sr Janet Cooper

### **Question for consideration**

Do you think the church should be concerned with issues of justice or should it confine itself to spiritual matters?