



MORAVIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

HOME AND OVERSEAS

FEBRUARY 2022

World Day of Prayer service on Friday March 4th 2022

Written by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This year's service takes its theme from Jeremiah Chapter 29 verse 11: **For I know the plans I have for you,** declares the LORD, **"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"**. We are currently living in difficult circumstances and this text gives us lots to think and pray about and to inspire us. The full passage (verses 1 - 14) tells us of the removal of all useful Israelites from Jerusalem to Babylon, by King Nebuchadnezzar, along with the destruction of the temple and all that the Israelites held dear: their culture, customs and language. God tells the people to settle in Babylon because it will be a long time before they can return "home". They are to marry and have families and they are to add to the prosperity and peace of their new country. From this we are reminded of the present day plight of refugees entering this country, being forced to leave their own homes in order to seek a place where they can settle in safety. We are also reminded of our own worries and concerns about the future because of events beyond our control. God tells us that we need not worry for plans have made to keep us from harm and we need to believe this.

Obviously, because the service has been written by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Scotland has its own National Committee because it was formed before E,W and NI), I do not need to inform you about the geography, culture, languages or history of our country. You may be interested to know, however, that the National Committee has produced a Power Point presentation of the 3 countries, which is downloadable from the WDP website. Who knows, you may learn something new from it!

During 2021 quite a lot of things happened. Many branches were unable to hold services on March 5th 2021 because we were still in lock-down. Organisers took to internet technology and arranged Zoom and live-streamed services. One branch I was involved with recorded the service and put it onto DVDs which were sent out to members of the congregations in the area. Some branches decided to hold their services at a time when we were out of lock-down and could meet together safely. Others decided a service in any form was not possible and arranged a coffee morning instead to help raise funds to perpetuate the work of WDP and to support chosen charities. All these efforts are to be commended and we, the National Committee, thank everyone for their ingenuity, determination and generosity.

National Committee meetings continued to be held every 2 months on Zoom until September when it was felt safe to meet in person at Central Methodist Hall in Marylebone, London. It was wonderful to be able to meet the other National Committee members in the flesh for the first time and to hold proper discussions. In November we met again at Charney Manor, Oxfordshire, in order to begin preparation work for the 2023 service which has been written by the women of Taiwan. To be able to spend time in fellowship with the National Committee members was a particular privilege.

I have now been made Field Officer for the North of England and Northern Ireland and in that role would like to give help and advice where I can. Please contact me if you live in one of these areas and need some information about where to find your nearest service or how to get resources for your Guide/Scout group, Youth Club or school. Lots of information can be found on the World Day of Prayer website: wwdp.org.uk. Since September I have also been privileged to meet Preparation Day Organisers and Branch Secretaries at preparation events. This has taken me to Manchester, Newcastle, Lincoln, Mexborough, Ripon and Leeds. How amazing it was at the Leeds Preparation Day to look up and see 5 Moravian sisters sitting on the front row of St. Andrew's Church, Roundhay, beaming with encouragement as I addressed the assembled group. Sr Wendy Hopcroft, although now retired from the National Committee, provided an excellent explanation of the children's and young people's activities

in place of our Chairperson who was unable to attend at the last moment. I know I can depend upon Sr Wendy to have my back whenever I need information about the organisation.

At this time of writing we cannot be sure of anything but it is hoped that services will take place in churches around the country. In the event that we are in lock-down once again we must take to the wonders of technology and be as ingenious as we were last year. The marvels of Zoom mean that anyone from any corner of the Earth can join any service as long as they register their intent beforehand (so they can be emailed a link). It was wonderful to witness the international service last year featuring the same Vanuatu women who had written the service.

As it is a special service for us in E, W and NI we want to make it even more so by recognising the work of women in our own areas, particularly those who devote their skills to the local community or volunteer with local charities. Please invite such a person to go along with you to your service and make them feel particularly welcome. Being an ecumenical organisation it is important to make sure that each church in your local branch is represented. Help to make the Moravian Church an important part: volunteer to read from the service booklet, bake a cake, bring your musical skills to the fore, welcome people at the door or chat to visitors.

Whatever the situation we find ourselves in, I pray that you are able to find a service near you where you may find inspiration and strength from the stories told and the prayers given.

Maureen Colbert