



MORAVIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

HOME AND OVERSEAS

FEBRUARY 2023

World Day of Prayer service on Friday March 3rd 2023

Written by the Christian women of Taiwan

This year's service takes its theme from Paul's letter to the Ephesians 1: 15 - 19. "I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers."

Taiwan is a modern country with a population of over 23 million. It sits on the Rim of Fire in the Pacific Ocean, north of the Philippines, east of Hong Kong and south-west of Japan. Portuguese sailors discovered Taiwan in the 16th century and named it Formosa or "Beautiful Island". Through history many different nations have occupied it in their turn until the Japanese were forced out at the end of the Second World War. Then Taiwan was placed under the Republic of China's administrative control. Following their loss in the Civil War, the Nationalist Government retreated and moved their capital to Taipei while claiming that they were the legitimate government of the whole of China. When the People's Republic of China was formed the world's governments recognised it as the true representative government of China. Today only 15 countries recognise the existence of Taiwan as a country in its own right. This puts Taiwan in a very difficult and dangerous position as the PRC have declared an interest in bringing Taiwan into the Chinese fold in what ever way is thought necessary. Taiwan, like Hong Kong before it, wants to maintain its independence but has seen what has happened in Hong Kong since it was ceded back to China. Xi Jinping, the Head of the PRC, seems to be watching for the outcome of Russia's war in the Ukraine before making his move.

Because the Bible text is taken from a letter by Paul to the Church he founded in Ephesus, the Taiwanese writers of the service have chosen to "write letters" to women who have inspired them. As in many other countries the Taiwanese women have concerns about pollution, climate change, domestic abuse, gender inequality and the pandemic. Please remember them in your prayers throughout the year as they struggle with these issues.

I was privileged to attend 3 services in 2022 all of which were held in Moravian Churches: Horton, Lower Wyke and Baildon. Horton is trying to rekindle local interest in the World Day of Prayer service and, although the number attending was small, 5 different churches were represented. Reports back from various parts of the country show that physical services were able to take place although numbers attending had declined possibly because of aging congregations and loss of confidence through the lockdown years. Again, through the generosity of those attending, donations raised have enabled us to continue the work of World Day of Prayer in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and across the globe. It has also been possible to provide grants for charities both here and abroad (see information in the Together in Prayer magazine and at the back of the service books).

Our annual Link Day, this year held in St Martin's-in-the-Field in early July, was beset by difficulties owing to the extreme heat. Few were able to attend as train rails buckled and temperatures soared. The proceedings were filmed and later put on the WDP website so that Preparation Day organisers could access the information. Even so National Committee members have been busy cascading information across the

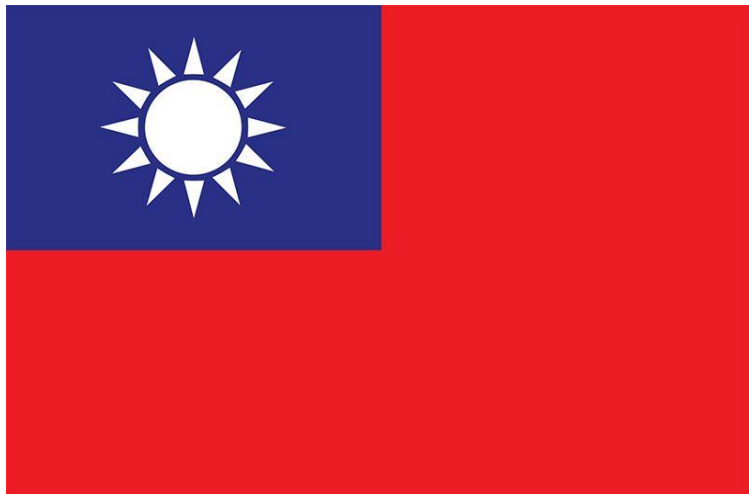
country. Because this is my first active year as Field Officer for the North of England and Northern Ireland, I was given permission to attend all the Preparation Days within my remit. That was before Covid struck! As ever, if you are intending to host a service or attend one in your area and need some advice or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will do what I can to help. If you have never attended a service I would suggest that you seek one out and see what you think of it. Should you wish to help in any way I can always put you in touch with local branches who would be delighted to accept your offer.

The World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical, women-led global prayer movement with the motto: "Informed prayer, prayerful action". Although there is only one official WDP service day per year it is a 365 day prayer movement. In order to encourage younger women to be part of the movement there is an annual weekend planned called "Y-Pray?" In 2023 it will be held at the Swanwick Centre in Derbyshire from 28th to the 30th April. All details can be found on the WDP website (www.wwdp.org.uk).

At this time of the year I get very confused because we are still receiving feed-back from the E, W and NI service held in March of this year, we are making preparations for the coming Taiwan service on March 3rd 2023 and have met to finalise materials for the 2024 service which has been written by the women of Palestine. In addition to this there have been many changes on the National Committee with longstanding members retiring and being replaced. Our new President is Nicky Hoskin-Stone and our new Chairperson is Carole Bourne. Our Administrator, Mary Judd, has also retired and been replaced by Vix Daniell. All this makes for an exciting future.

As before, 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



The Taiwanese flag