



Methodist Women in Britain

Autumn Newsletter

2025

Welcome to this edition of our quarterly newsletter where you will be able to catch up on where members of the Exec team have been in recent months and look forward to upcoming MWiB events. So put the kettle on and get out your diary, there is lots to read.

Our CoChairs Maggie and Leonora have been out and about on their travels at home and abroad and you can catch up with all their news. This is Maggie's last newsletter as CoChair and she reflects on the last 3 years. Our new CoChair, Olive, starts officially on 1st September and you will find news of her commissioning service on the following page. She has already been hard at work behind the scenes making preparations for some new events including a series of Webinars called 'Let's talk about it' - look out for the adverts on pages 12 & 15 and share the information with other women in your church who may be interested in some of the topics up for discussion.

Our Helen Kim Memorial Scholar Madeleine & our World Federation President Barbara are entering their final year in post, with the 15th World Assembly 'Arise and Shine' taking place in Auckland, New Zealand 25th—30th August 2026. This is when our new HKMS and our new Vice President Britain & Ireland area will take up the posts. Please share the relevant adverts with any women you feel might be interested in these opportunities—or maybe apply yourself if you feel God prompting you.

The MWiB officers of the executive team met at Cliff College for an intense 24 hour workout earlier this month, forward planning for the year ahead. It was good to share this time and we hope to meet many of you during the course of the year at different events.



Bronwen

Olive, Caroline, Maggie, Sheila, Bronwen, Ruth, Leonora



This service will also be livestreamed on our YouTube channel on Sunday 21st September, 3pm

<https://youtube.com/live/zvdAyft7U3M>

Please continue to support Olive with your prayers as her role with Methodist Women in Britain begins officially on 1st September and join us in person or virtually for this service of commissioning.



World Federation Day 2025

Weaving Webs of Hope



Speaker - Sandra Lopez from Methodist Global Relations team

Craftivism with Becca Wakelin from All We Can

Bible Study Worship Fellowship

Come and join us on Saturday 18th October

10am to 4pm

Starbeck Methodist Church, 93 High St, Harrogate HG2 7LH

Bring your own lunch – drinks provided

Booking: mwibworldfed@gmail.com

Rwanda A visit full of surprise

by Maggie Woods CoChair

In June I was delighted to travel to Rwanda with Revd Dr Andrew Ashdown from Global Relations. As co-ordinator for the whole of Africa, Andrew had a wealth of knowledge and experience which he was generous to share. We were the guest of Bishop Samuel as head of the Free Methodist Church in Rwanda.

It was for me a visit full of surprises.

Having been told to pack for their hot summer the temperature dropped to around 17 degrees as soon as I arrived and I was accused of bringing the British weather with me. Although it was hot at times much of Rwanda is green and hilly and even has its own rain forest so the climate was very comfortable.

I was able to travel from the border with Uganda to the border with Congo and see the rich variety of the landscape from dry and dusty to lush and tropical with some mountains thrown in for good measure. Rwanda was incredibly beautiful. It is also the cleanest country in Africa. There is a strong environmental policy with plastic bags declared as illegal and single use plastics discouraged. In the capital Kigali I can honestly say I did not see any litter on the streets There is a citizens charter where each citizen is expected to give time back to their community. every two weeks.



Rwanda is amazingly self sufficient , growing fruit , rice and vegetables. Their coffee is amazing and I particularly enjoyed fresh pineapple and bananas for breakfast every morning of my stay. The picture shows me meeting the ladies from 'A friend in need cooperative' growing pineapples in the hills

On a more sombre note I was able to visit two of the many genocide memorials which was very moving. I had not fully registered that the genocide was thirty years ago and the churches are still heavily involved in peace and reconciliation work. Despite some issues regarding public health and safety the church is thriving and active.

I was also able to explore the role of women in the five year plan for the church. I was pleased to see that enabling and empowering the role of women was visible in every section. I was able to visit the theological college where women candidates are increasing year on year.

Bishop Samuel invited me to preach on Pentecost Sunday as he hoped it would encourage other women. The jury may be out on this but it was an immense privilege.



Worship on Pentecost Sunday
with Aloyise interpreting



There are so many stories to share from Rwanda so if you would like me to share this in your area in some way do get in touch.

Maggie

Email: communications.mwib@gmail.com and I will pass any requests onto Maggie for you. Bronwen

**MWiB Residential Conference**
Friday 10th – Sunday 12th April 2026
**at The Hayes Conference Centre,
Swanwick, Derbyshire**
**Our Keynote Speaker this year is
Mrs Carolyn Godfrey**
Safeguarding Officer for Darlington & Newcastle Districts
**Plus the usual mix of worship, workshops,
fun, food & fellowship**
Booking will open in January

A Whirlwind Year

Leonora Wassell CoChair

Well, what a whirlwind of a year it has been. When I took on the responsibilities of CoChair of Methodist Women in Britain, little did I know I would travel around the connexion, go to New York, impersonate Susanna Wesley, attend Edinburgh Pride and be invited to Sri Lanka.



I wished to meet as many people as I could when I took office, so I embarked on a series of visits to District Days across the Connexion, from Cornwall to Manchester, Lincoln to London, Beds, Herts & Essex to Southampton, West Yorkshire to Northumberland and Birmingham to Stockport. It was a delight to meet so many members and hear what was going on in the different areas, the projects they supported, the amazing efforts to raise funds & the depth of spirituality displayed.

Leonora's report on her trip to New York appeared in our summer newsletter

Just two weeks after I returned from New York, we had our yearly Conference at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick. We had a packed & varied programme, with Keynote speaker Rev Dr Sonia Hicks, workshops, worship, and entertainment. It was very moving to see 200 women sing "Christ be my light". On the Saturday evening we had an open mike night in which we were entertained by a variety of acts. Susanna Wesley (aka Rainbow Rev) compered the night.

June was an extremely busy month. It began with the inaugural session of the Ghanaian Women's Fellowship in Telford on 1 June, where Olive and I were treated to 4 hours of exuberant worship and generous gifts.

It was agreed by the Exec that I would tour Scotland and the Shetland Islands accompanied by Barbara Harrison, the area Trustee. We enjoyed 4 days on Shetland, being shown around by the MWiB Ambassador, Deacon Elizabeth Colley. We saw a variety of projects, visited historical sights, and enjoyed the renowned hospitality of the people of Shetland. Our funniest moment was sat on the ferry to Yell. Not able to climb the steep steps to where the passengers sat, we were given two office chairs on the car deck to make the crossing. We giggled all the way as we watched peoples faces as they saw us.



We then embarked on our tour of Scotland, calling at Inverness, Perth, Glasgow and Edinburgh, sharing my talk on the Status of Women – a way forward.

We had the opportunity of meeting with the team that run the Women's Hub in Dundee, the Recovery Church in Glasgow, and the Bike Shed in Inverness. Amazing projects within the community. The unexpected bonus for me was attending Edinburgh Pride. We stood outside Augustine URC church with placards that proclaimed, "All are loved by God". All those marching applauded us which made me quite emotional. The following morning, I had the privilege of preaching at The City of Edinburgh Methodist Church.

I had one day after I returned before I set off for the Methodist Conference. I had been invited to attend the Global Relations Pre-Conference meeting with our overseas partners. It was fascinating to hear the work of Methodists in other countries. We had an opportunity to share what issues we face going forward. I was particularly interested in the work going on in Sri Lanka with the War Widows so when I spoke to Rebecca Boardman, Deputy Director of Global Relationships, about my possible overseas visit next year I asked if I could go to Sri Lanka. That afternoon she approached me and asked if I was free in August, this year. I have been invited to attend the Methodist Conference of Sri Lanka beginning on 20 August. I will also get to see some of the projects undertaken by the church. More about that visit in our next newsletter.

Leonora

At Methodist Conference in Telford we held our 3rd Mary Bosanquet Lecture, this year given by Kathy Galloway from the Iona Community. The lecture entitled 'Pay Attention, Be Astonished, Tell About It' is now available to watch on our YouTube channel and is well worth a watch. We were so saddened to hear the news of Kathy Galloway's death in late August and those of us who heard Kathy speak in June feel very privileged to have met such an inspiring lady. May she Rest In Peace.



*Kathy Galloway giving
our Mary Bosanquet
Lecture in Telford*

*Presentation of gifts
& thanks to Maggie
Woods as she steps
down as CoChair*



Au revoir and thank you

Maggie Woods

Firstly I want to say thank you for all the gifts and good wishes as my term of Co Chair for Methodist Women in Britain comes to an end.

It has been an amazing experience with so many opportunities and I am grateful for every one of them. When I was first appointed the world was in a very different place because of lockdown, Ruth Parrott's commissioning was on zoom and my interview and commissioning were also on zoom. Local MWiB groups were struggling as they were unable to meet and many closed.

MWiB lost its seat in the restructuring of Conference and we were also working on changes to our constitution in response to all the changes. It was particularly sad for me that my maiden speech at Conference was to express my regret that we had lost our seat and to ask for the decision to be kept under review. Yet despite this MWiB continued to keep working to promote "For Women For Justice For Christ" and it is good to look back and see how we were able to keep moving forward in such difficult circumstances.

I think it helps to reflect on where you have come from to understand where you are and where you hope to go.

For Ruth Parrott and I moving from President / Vice President to Co Chair was not without its challenges as we looked at a new way of working... something that continued when Leonora was appointed. It has been a real pleasure to work with a great group on the Exec and with the trustees and ambassadors. It has also been great going around the areas and meeting those at the grass roots where so much valuable work is done. Meeting and greeting at District days for example enabled me to challenge the myths that impacted our image. Men are welcome... We campaign... We write worship materials.. Who would have thought it?

I am saying au revoir rather than goodbye as I will be supporting Annah as an ambassador when I step down and hope to see you all at future events including Swanwick. Thank you for all that we shared during my three years

I am confident that Leonora and Olive will take us forward in amazing ways.



*Picture highlights from
World Federation event
in Porto, 2024*



It is strange to be looking back at the months just gone – I didn't write a report in the last newsletter because I hadn't done anything noteworthy, but now I've got a lot to talk about!

Back in May, I was settling into a new church. God had unexpectedly called me out of my lovely village Methodist church into quite a large nondenominational church in a nearby town. My sister and her husband had both been baptised there on Easter Sunday and I had done an Alpha Course with them (it isn't just for new Christians, you know). Suddenly, I found myself in a totally alien context – a large church with lots of families, young children, and even young men, a solid half an hour of singing before the sermon, and so little structure that I didn't know one week to the next whether the service would finish at 11:30 or 1pm. It felt like plunging it at the deep end, but I also loved it, and am still loving it; I've been attending for some months now and have started finding my feet.

At the end of May, I went with our Co-Chair Leonora Wassell to Cliff Fest, a wonderful festival at Cliff College in Derbyshire. I knew so little about Cliff College, despite having heard the name a great deal, that I didn't even know it was Methodist until we were on site.

Leonora and I were running the MWiB stall together in the Market Hub. We were well-placed and made good friends with the other stallholders around us. Leonora, knowing that I had never been to a Christian festival like this before, manned (or womaned?) the stall while I went to different seminars, lectures, and worship services – some of which can be found on the Cliff College YouTube channel.



I have to contain myself here – I had such a good time, I could quite probably write a whole pamphlet on it. I'll limit myself to describing some of the events.

I attended the three main Bible studies lead every morning by Ben Pugh, one of the lecturers. The theme of the festival was Holiness Calling, and the Bible studies were all based around Isaiah 6:1-8, one of my favourite passages of Scripture from which we get the beautiful worship song I the Lord of sea and sky. Many of the other events I attended were based around the same scripture.

I also attended a series of three seminars hosted by Leslie Newton, Yorkshire North & East District Chair. They were titled Spreading Scriptural Holiness, and looked back on the behaviours and structures of the early Methodist movement, reflecting on how the modern Methodist Church might reclaim the passion, purpose, and power of our pioneering predecessors, if you'll forgive me the alliteration.

Upon returning home from this exciting and somewhat overwhelming festival, I was walking on air with enthusiasm and applied to Cliff College's gap year programme, in the hopes of spending a year in the beautiful Peak District in Christian community – and with access to their library. When I was refused, it was gently suggested to me that I might be better suited to their one-year undergraduate course on Theology and Mission. I applied, and was accepted, so from September this year, I will be a fulltime student for the first time since I was eight years old!



In June, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Epworth, as I was invited to speak at the Lincolnshire District Day hosted at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church. I was rather intimidated to be speaking in such an historic

venue, but I was thrilled, too. The theme of my talk was The Challenge of Comfort, the upshot of which was that we as Christians are called to comfort those who suffer in a way which doesn't count the cost or worry about being made uncomfortable itself – in short, self-sacrificially. We were served by the delightful men of the church who were as good at making conversation as they were at making tea; I was very glad to have met them.



After the talk, we relocated to Epworth Old Rectory, the family home of the Wesley family. We had a guided tour by a kind man who obviously knew his stuff by heart, which was fantastic, and we had cake, which was also fantastic. Having had my mind and body nourished by these treats, I was happy to return to the comfortable home I was being hosted in and have my heart nourished too by the quieter and gentler fellowship of an evening walk and a hot meal.

All this was possible because God is so good and, following my car crash in March, provided me with a new car in record time.

Come August, I will not only be packing for my year at Cliff College, but I will also be entering into my final year as the Helen Kim Memorial Scholar. The adverts are all out, the publicity is up – please do get the word out, because an opportunity like this five-year leadership development programme really is once in a lifetime, and it's lifechanging. I began my time with MWiB as a small, timid, anxious girl, and I come away as a confident, sociable woman of God.

My next report will likely be all about coursework, lectures, and theology textbooks – I'll apologise in advance... Even if I'm not that sorry. **Madeleine**



World Federation
of Methodist and
Uniting Church Women



Methodist Women
in Britain

Are you passionate about knowing Christ and making Christ known?

Do you want to work with others in Britain, and around the world, on issues of equality and social justice?

Would you like to develop your skills as a leader in your church and community – and beyond?

The

Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship

is a 5 year leadership development programme for young women aged 18 – 30

offered by the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. The scholars form an international group of young women, taking a role in their national Methodist women's group and in the world Methodist community.

You will:

Build relationships with women of all generations from around the world

Develop your leadership skills alongside other young women leaders

Grow in faith and in understanding of the Methodist movement in Britain and around the world

Work on issues of social justice with the World Federation and Methodist Women in Britain

Encourage other young women to become involved

Closing date for applications: 29th September 2025

Further information and application form available from: communications.mwib@gmail.com

MWiB Service @ Stamford

Nina Rawlins

With the increase of Local arrangements we used one of these to highlight the work of Methodist Women in Britain one Sunday. This was well received by the congregation and with the help of the Northants Trustee, her daughter and the Communications officer the organisation was shared. We used the power point which gives a brief summary of our set up and the work we do in the local, national and international stage. Olive Ruzvidzo, co-chair designate was also present and was welcomed to her new role. We are looking forward to working with Olive in the future.

If you are interested in doing something similar to raise awareness in your church or Circuit the power point is available by contacting Bronwen Braidell, MWiB Communications Officer at communications.mwib@gmail.com who will send you an updated copy.

Applications are invited for the position of
World Federation Area Vice President 2026-2031

This is a five-year volunteer role beginning in August 2026 at the World Assembly in Auckland, New Zealand when the person appointed will become Area Vice President for Europe: Britain and Ireland, one of nine Areas of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW). The Area Vice President will work closely with the WFMUCW Area President and be a member of the ~~MWIB~~ Executive for the five-year term.

A full role description, application form and further details about the MWIB Executive can be found on our website www.mwib.org.uk or email our Communications Officer at communications.mwib@gmail.com

For questions about the role contact Barbara Easton britainireland.president@wfmucw.org

Closing date for applications is Monday 10th November 2025

Interviews will be held at Tavistock House, London on the afternoon of Monday 24th November 2025

Gifts given to Queen's Foundation Leavers

Bronwen Braisdell

Once again MWiB has given small gifts to those leaving college to go into circuit. This year Rev Dr Jane Craske presented gifts on our behalf to 11 presbyters and 4 deacons. They were, Jane tells me, delighted with their gifts. We pray for them as they begin their ministry and pray too that they will encourage their congregations to be aware of the work that Methodist Women in Britain are doing across the connexion & beyond.

Pictured: the Methodist leavers with their gifts



Part time students

Full time students



Hey ladies! 🙌 Ready for some real talk and a few laughs? 🗣️

Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) is pulling back the curtain on the topics that affect us most but don't always get airtime in church. Starting **September 2025**, we're launching a brand new webinar series that's all about "Let's Talk About It!" 💬

Join us as we tackle big topics with wit, wisdom, and a whole lot of heart. We're talking:

☕ **Menopause:** Hot flushes, hot topics!.

😊 **Intimacy:** It's not just for the Song of Songs.

🛑 **Female Genital Mutilation:** Let's break the silence and protect our sisters.

🧠 **Mental Health:** Putting our minds at ease, one session at a time.

🏠 **Domestic Abuse (VAWG):** Because love shouldn't hurt.

💰 **Social Justice (Poverty and Money):** Making our pennies and our principles count.

✈️ **Immigration:** Welcoming the stranger, in more ways than one.

🏳️ **Gender/Sexual Identity:** Celebrating every beautiful part of God's creation
Because we are all fearfully and wonderfully made.

📖 **Faith and Politics:** What would Jesus tweet? Let's find out.

This series is our way of living out MWiB's mission to empower women, seek justice, and make Christ known. We're building a supportive community, strengthening our faith, and having some fun along the way!

📅 **31** Mark your calendars! You won't want to miss it!

The first webinar, Menopause, takes place on Thursday 25th September at 7.30pm

Follow this link to register your place for September & to receive the Zoom link
<https://forms.gle/fXkFMbUMyEreZVhQ7>

Webinars are scheduled for the following dates this autumn:

*23rd October—Intimacy
27th November—FGM*

Check our website & social media for details of how to register each month

News has reached us from Kate Little, Lead Officer for Survivors who is coordinating a project to illustrate the scale of forced adoptions from Mother & Baby Homes from the 1950s to 1980s. They want half a million knitted white/pastel pink/pastel blue baby booties, each no larger than 6 inches square. It says they hope to have them by Summer/Autumn 2026 and there will be an art installation to display them although it does not say where or when as yet. More details: www.movementforanadoptionapology.org/maa-bootie-appeal/

News from the Districts & upcoming events—we want to hear what MWiB is getting up to in your area. Please send your news to me at: communications.mwib@gmail.com

Cannock Circuit hosted a District Day with the theme 'Butterflies'. Various craft options were available including fridge magnets, button pictures, candle holders. The day ended with worship.



Margaret Dunn (Ambassador)

Cumbria District shared in Afternoon Tea at Cottage Wood Centre following a talk by Rev Barbara Fairburn about her life in Sweden where she lived for 6 years before entering the ministry. 'Things look different from here' gave the 30 attendees insight into life in Scandanavia and a great time of fellowship was had.

*Delphine Gratrix
(Ambassador)*



Rev'd Alison Richardson from the South East Cornwall circuit shares news from MWiB in Cornwall. We held a very successful Spring District Day which Leonora attended while on her travels. Since then we have kept up the momentum with two afternoon teas (very popular) and are planning two autumn events.



I spoke about MWiB at Stoke Climsland MC recently and the afternoon raised £140 for the Fisherman's Mission which is our President's chosen charity. Our President is Brenda Stuart-White. Donna Perry organised the event & is at the front speaking.

The other event was at Bealbury MC, the church hall was packed for this one, it was a huge success and raised £260 for the Fishermans Mission. Brenda Stuart-White spoke about MWiB and the Fisherman's Mission too. Louise James took these photographs. Ruth Wilton was responsible for all of the refreshments and worked tirelessly on the day. Thanks to everyone who came and special thanks to Shirley and her team at Bealbury for hosting us.



An autumn circuit day and Advent activity day are planned and the District have an MWiB Retreat at Falmouth planned.

Cornwall President Brenda Stuart-White speaking



NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE DISTRICT



MWiB DISTRICT AWAY DAY

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
PERCY STREET, AMBLE, NE65 0AG
SATURDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2025

9 to 10.30 am Toast, tea and coffee available at Church Coffee morning for £2

10.30 am Welcome and Bible Study

Morning Bible Study, reflections and meditation

STILL WATERS

Led by Helen Van Teutem



12.30 to 1.30pm Own packed lunch, drinks provided

1.30 to 3.00 pm Afternoon Events including crafts, circle dancing and an opportunity to explore Amble

3.00 to 3.30pm Closing worship followed by tea and cakes

There is ramped access, an accessible toilet and free on-street parking nearby



Lincolnshire District



Wednesday 1st October 2025

at Trinity Methodist Church, Immingham

313A Pelham Rd, Immingham DN40 1NB

Butterfly Movement

– Craftivism in Action

Rev Leonora Wassell (CoChair MWiB)

will talk about the Mirabel Sisters, the 16 days of activism and lead us in a craftivism activity

Come & join us for a day of fellowship and challenge

11am to 3pm

Tea & Coffee served from 10.30am

Bring your packed lunch, drinks provided

ALL WELCOME

If you have a District Day planned why not advertise it on the MWiB website or in this newsletter. Email your poster or news to communications.mwib@gmail.com

Closing date for submissions for the next newsletter is November 15th 2025

Remembering Joan Stott—WFMUCW World Secretary (1996-2001)

Pam Stenson (Ambassador Darlington) says this wonderful tribute to Joan Stott of Australia who died recently may be of wider interest. Pam says 'I had the honour & great privilege of knowing Joan for many years from early 1990s onwards - she was a woman of faith and of prayerful action who will be missed all around the world by Methodist & Uniting Church Women. It's very fitting that she will be remembered at the World Assembly next year 2026 in New Zealand, within Joan's home South Pacific Area'.

<https://uniting.church/a-tribute-to-joan-stott-a-woman-of-unwavering-faith-and-action/>

Her years as World Secretary under the presidency of Rev Dr Khushnud Azariah were a time of innovation as the Weaving Together programme for leaders was established and the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship was created to nurture young women's leadership. As Secretary, Joan made a significant contribution to compiling a detailed Federation Handbook to guide global assemblies.

She participated in numerous WFMUCW and NGO United Nations conferences around the world, always advocating for women's leadership and empowerment. *(Taken from the online tribute)*

Menopause: Understanding and Supporting a Natural Life Stage

Hosted by Methodist Women in Britain

Menopause is a natural and normal life stage that can present unique questions and challenges. Whether you are navigating this transition yourself or supporting a loved one through it, we warmly invite you to join us for an empowering and informative session designed to foster understanding and confidence.

We offer a safe and welcoming space to discuss the realities of menopause and how to embrace this life stage with confidence. The session will cover:

Physical Changes: What happens to your body during menopause, including common experiences such as hot flashes, night sweats, joint pain, vaginal dryness, and changes in sexual health and sleep patterns.

Emotional Well-being: The emotional and mental aspects, including managing mood fluctuations, anxiety, and challenges with focus.

Practical Strategies: Exploring treatment options and lifestyle habits that can help ease the transition.

We will also address the unique pressures many women face at this time of life, such as caring for aging parents, raising teenagers, or balancing professional and personal responsibilities.

This session will provide practical advice, expert guidance, and the reassurance that you are not alone.

Date: 25 September 2025

Time: 19.30 to 20.30

Platform: Zoom

Register now to secure your spot: <https://forms.gle/fXkFMbUMyEreZVhQ7>

Let's open the conversation, learn together, and support one another through this natural life transition.



Butterfly Movement Service of Thanksgiving & Affirmation

**Tuesday 25th November, 10.30-12.30 at Wesley's Chapel, 49 City Road,
London EC1Y 1AU**

Preacher: Rev Michaela Youngson, Assistant Secretary of Conference

Marks the start of the 16 days of Activism Campaign against gender based violence

Contact us: PLEASE USE THESE EMAIL ADDRESSES

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If your contact is person specific please put Leonora or Olive in the subject line

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General enquiries: 0300 030 9873

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Find us on Facebook, Instagram & YouTube



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**Trustee meetings: 8th September (with Ambassadors) Zoom; 10th—12th October St Katherines, London;
5th—6th February 2026 Swanwick; 11th May (with Ambassadors) Zoom**

Please use communications.mwib@gmail.com initially to make contact with your Area Trustee.