



Methodist Women's Fellowship



April 2018

Dear Friends,

Malo e Lelei, Talofa Lava, Noa'ia e Mauri, Nisa bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kia Ora.
and warm greetings as Winter arrives.

As we think back over the very special season of Easter I pray that your hearts will be open and you will face each new day in a new and wonderful way telling others of the good news – Christ is risen! Easter is a time of sadness, a time of joy, a time for reflection, a time for new beginnings and direction.

What wonder and joy that we have the same news as Mary Magdalene, another woman chosen to proclaim! Within the time and culture of the ministry of Jesus, the place of women was seen as inferior and their testimony deemed untrustworthy. Isn't it remarkable then that Mary was shown to remain faithful to Jesus until the end and be the eyewitness of Jesus dying and the first to encounter him alive in the garden! She then ran full of excitement to tell the others "He is risen indeed". As she drew near to the tomb on Easter Sunday morning ready to care for her loved one may you reach out with actions of care, justice and compassion witnessing to the new life rising up within you and all around you. Like the Samaritan woman at the well she ran to tell the good news. Are you following her example?

I enjoyed the "Mary Magdalene" movie which showed a respectful view of her family life, her male family members, her influence on many women and her place in the group of disciples. The scenery around the Sea of Galilee, Magdala, Cana and Jerusalem was beautiful and I came away with new insights into this chosen women and all of those whose lives she touched.

I continue to feel privileged every day serving you all as your President and I praise God for all the experiences I am having sharing our ministry together. In February Ofa, Valmai, Una, Lynne, Moe and Mena joined me at Willow Park Christian Centre in South Auckland with 150 at the Tongan District Women's Conference. The theme was "Chosen People Called to Proclaim – With Hearts on Fire". Thankyou Siniva Vaitohi, our next MWF President and Rev Setaita Veikune, our next National Church President for a spiritually enriching weekend with you all. I go back to the same place to meet with the Mafutaga Tama'ita'I Sinoti Samoa Ekalesia Metotisi Niu Sila District leaders on Friday 20 April. Two days later I will meet with our newest MWF group at Mt Roskill church.

On 7 March I attended on behalf of all Methodist women the 125th Celebration of Women's Suffrage with 400 others at Government House, Wellington. There was an impressive line-up of young women speakers challenging us to contribute more to-wards a positive future of all of our girls and women. We remember Kate Sheppard and her Methodist fellow-workers in the Christian Temperance Union and all those who supported them with the five petitions for the vote for women in the 1880s and 1890s. Perhaps your foremothers are on that petition at the He Tohu exhibition at the National Library near the Beehive in Central Wellington.

We have had a plea for more younger women to attend your district National Council Women meetings to continue the ideals honouring the achievement of those women over 125 years. Kate was the first Christchurch President in 1896. Her political impact at that time was immense. Can your group arrange for your young members to participate and continue the Methodist legacy and lead the world politically again?

We had our official visit to our own district, Canterbury, with visitors from Mid Canterbury and Lynne, Ofa, Roz, Moe and I shared our fifteen month Executive experiences. In mid-March Roz and I enjoyed our visit to Bay of Plenty meeting members from most of the local churches around Te Puke then a Coffee Morning in Tauranga the next day. We shared Lenten readings and news from each group.

On 15th April Roz and I visit Nelson then Blenheim and in early May Lynne and I visit New Plymouth, Whanganui and Levin. We are looking forward to renewing friendships and sharing our good MWF news in those places.

The World Day of Prayer written by the Suriname women was well received last month and we enjoyed their CD music and DVD photographs. Thank you to all who lead these services with our ecumenical sisters. Keep meeting with them!

Another Smethurst Grants Meeting has been held. Please pray for the sixteen recipients – twelve are studying, three are attending an Asian Conference and one a Central American conference. Can I remind all to send their thankyou letters and update the committee on your progress and learnings? The next date for applications is 20 June and all information is found on the MWF website under methodist.org.nz.

Are you spreading the good news about our National Projects? The care givers of the South Uganda HIV and Aids orphans look forward to new new water tanks and bathroom facilities enhancing their health, cleanliness and educational progress. We will also give hope to the children of prisoners in our country by breaking the cycle of intergenerational crime. We will be funding the training of volunteer mentors who will work with family support workers supporting more positive futures for about 23,000 children. Please ensure that your treasurer sends in your donations by 15th June to Valmai Horlor, 9 Logie Place, Bromley, Christchurch, 8062.

Please also send Valmai your membership fees at the same time, thankyou secretaries.

Our Convention planning is progressing well thanks to a Christchurch Local Arrangements Committee. Please start saving for a wonderful time in our Garden City October 25 – 28th and come and meet the present and new National Executive lead by Siniva Vaitohi of Auckland. The registration forms will be sent soon.

Have you any Tributes, Remits or Recommendations? Please send these to Philomena Petaia, our secretary, 3 Dunmurry Place, Casebrook Christchurch 8051 by the end of May. Please pray for Siniva and her team, our first from Feohi'anga'a Fafine Metotisi Ekalesia Niu Sila, our Tongan District.

Pray also for the earthquake affected areas of Papua and New Guinea where I had a year teaching under the Methodist Order of St Stephen. 125 have died, 35,000 have damaged homes and dozens are injured. We remember the support of hundreds of our working volunteers and fund raising for our Methodist Mission sites throughout the country since the 1920s. Our MWF sisters need our support and prayers right now.

We also pray for all suffering from the flooding in West Viti Levu in Fiji. We donated \$2,189 to a Boys' Orphanage in Ba and await news of that area seen on television recently. We continue to remember all of our MWF members in New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga after weather events this year.

The Lindisfarne (Invercargill) MWF have written acknowledging their loved member, the late Sister Myra Fraser, who served our church in the Solomon Islands for twenty one years. "She certainly left us with many memories! Such an example and inspiration to us. We miss her funny stories and the amazing experiences she shared with us at our meetings – a life lead for our Lord". Another chosen person called to proclaim! There are now two fundraising projects for the Solomon Islands needing support- the Helena Goldie College of Nursing Building Fund and Kokeqolo Village water project.

Ninety two of us are getting excited planning to attend the South Pacific Area Seminar in Sigatoka, Fiji in early July. Thank you to Lynne and Valmai our financial organising team. I will be sending the item outline soon with the songs, the music and the dancing programme to all participants.

It is time to plan your annual general meetings again. Can you take time to discuss how to encourage younger members to come to your meetings? Thank you to those standing down from the leadership teams and God bless all those stepping into new roles.

I finish with this quote from Martin Luther "Our Lord has written the promise of the Resurrection not in books alone but in every colourful leaf in Autumn". Enjoy this season, God bless you all,

Dianne, Lynne, Valmai, Barbara, Una, Moe, Mena, Roz and Ofa.