



FIRST FRIDAY LETTER

The World Methodist Council March 2020

Greetings from the General Secretary

Warm Christian greetings during this holy Lenten Season when we try to break from our daily routines into solitude, fasting and prayer to reflect on our lives and our relationship with God.

After spending February “in the fast lane” with meetings in Britain and the United States, it was good to start my Lenten journey in the peace, tranquility, and natural beauty of “home” in Cape Town. The most enduring memories of the past month was a visit together with Jackie Bolden to one of our Past Presidents, Dr. Francis Alguire in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

I also journeyed with our Development Officer, Ivan Samdaan, to pay a courtesy call to Rev. Dr. Stanley Mogoba, a 1996 recipient of the World Methodist Peace Award for his commitment to peace and contribution to South Africa’s transition to democracy. It was good to meet with these giants of Methodism on whose shoulders we stand.



Bishop Abrahams and Jackie Bolden visit Past President Dr. Frances Alguire (wearing president’s medal) with her pastor and two daughters.

After sharing in a service to commemorate the Jewish Holocaust last month, I am alarmed at the deafening silence of religious organizations and the international community to the growing nationalism and fascism around the world. There has been little to no condemnation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) whose followers on 23 February 2020 attacked mosques, Muslim homes, shops, and businesses in Delhi that left 42 killed and hundreds injured. It is claimed that the violence was fueled by the Citizen Amendment Act, growing Hindu nationalism and hatred towards Muslims. The World Methodist Council identified three focus areas for the quinquennium, poverty and inequality, climate justice, and racism, and other forms of discrimination. We cannot remain silent but must speak out loudly and clearly or endure God’s judgment. (Isaiah 66, Romans 2:1-5)

The world over, our routines have been disrupted by the coronavirus. Many people have died, international gatherings postponed, and travel curtailed. Please pray for all infected and affected by this global pandemic.

The past month has been a busy time for our President and Development Officer, who launched the Presidential Legacy Circle in Nigeria while visiting His Eminence and Past Primate of the Methodist Church Nigeria, the Rev. Dr. Sunday Mbang. Please read more about this initiative and the Nigerian visit in this issue of the First Friday Letter. Other articles include an appeal to pray for peace on the Korean Peninsula, the Africa Methodist Council, Heads of Conferences Summit, and news of events from around the world in the Methodist/Wesleyan family.

Yours in mission,
Ivan M Abrahams

Bishop Abrahams meeting with Rev. Dr. Stanley Mogoba in South Africa



Development Officer works to strengthen WMC financial position



Development Officer Ivan Samdaan (second from right) and President J.C. Park travel to Nigeria to share information on the Presidential Legacy Circle.

A new initiative for the World Methodist Council has been announced by Development Officer Ivan Samdaan and President Rev. Dr. J.C. Park during their February visit to Nigeria. Work began on the Presidential Legacy Circle (PLC) in order to recognize the efforts of former and current leaders, while strengthening the mission and ministry of the Council. The Presidential Legacy Circle will involve former presidents of the WMC and those who were affected by their guidance.

While in Nigeria, President Park and Development Officer Samdaan held meetings with His Eminence and Past Prelate of the Methodist Church Nigeria, the Rev. Dr. Sunday Mbang, who served as President of the Council from 2001 to 2006. He was only the second African to lead the WMC, with the first being Bishop Lawi Imatiu who served the 1986 to 1991 Quinquennium.

After hearing the rationale and expected outcomes of the PLC, Dr. Mbang embraced and expressed his immediate support to this initiative. He expressed his gratitude towards the Council in acknowledging the contribution and the role Methodists played and indicated the importance of “remembering those who made contributions to the global Wesleyan/Methodist movement and would like to continue to do so.”

In addition to sharing the PLC initiative, President Park and Development Officer Samdaan discussed other resource mobilisation initiatives and the need for sustaining the Council’s Mission and Ministries with the current Prelate, His Eminence Dr. Uche, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Akinwale, Secretary of Conference, and Bishop Professor Umana, Superintendent Bishop of the Church of the Nazarene.

Their visit also included attending the Enthronement of the Rev. Dr. Ekong as Archbishop of Ikot-Ekpene and met with Methodists in this archdiocese as well as in

Abudja and Uyo. Cordial discussions with the Vice-President of Nigeria, HE Yemi Osinbajo, were also part of the trip.

“From a resource mobilisation point of view and in particular the commitment made by the Methodist Church Nigeria through her Prelate, the Secretary of Conference and the Lay Leadership, of supporting any resource mobilisation initiative, I believe that the WMC strategy is on a good path toward ensuring the sustainability of its mission and ministries,” Samdaan explained.

“All Presidents of the WMC are invited to engrave their names forever in the annals of this beloved movement,” Samdaan continued. “As leaders who have served the Methodist movement at various stages of its history, the Presidential Legacy Circle seeks to engage all Presidents to set an example that will ensure that the important work of mission and ministry across the world continues, and will continue their legacy,” he added. This work was started by Methodists/Wesleyan founding father, John Wesley whose quote is well known: “The world is my parish.”

WMC Presidents may directly give to the Presidential Legacy Circle. Others may give in President’s honour or memory to recognize the great contributions of these individuals to Methodism. Gifts may be one-time or on-going, by cash or check, stocks or bonds, or through a will or trust. Contact the development officer at developmentofficer@worldmethodistcouncil.org

To honour or memorialize a former president donate by clicking [here](#).

If you would like to share how this leader impacted you we would love to hear from you. Contact us at communications@worldmethodistcouncil.org

You're invited!

THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL

welcomes all to a ceremony honoring

The Rev. Dr. Inderjit Bhogal,

recipient of the 2018 World Methodist Peace Award

Friday, 27 March, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in The Library

Hosted by Methodist Central Hall Westminster and The Methodist Church of Great Britain

at

Methodist Central Hall Westminster
Storey's Gate, London, SW1H 9NH, United Kingdom

Refreshments and a time to meet the honoree will follow the ceremony.

*"We are gratified and humbled by the work of this great man,
who is a shining example of serving ... through a
lifetime of labor and sacrifice."*

-Bishop Ivan Abrahams, General Secretary and CEO,

World Methodist Council



Attendees must register online at no cost by the link:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/29617157953>

For more information or questions contact Jennifer Prentice
SoC@methodistchurch.org.uk

Prayer for Christian Unity in Rome

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been part of ecumenical spirituality since 1968; its origins date back over 100 years. Rev. Tony Franklin-Ross, WMC Ecumenical Relationships Chair, joined the churches in Rome for their observance of this week in January. He also made an opportunity to spend time with the acting Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome (MEOR), Rev. Dr. Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman.

There was a rich array of services and opportunities for churches, ministers and members of diverse denominations, to pray together for unity. They arranged from an ecumenical service at the Catholic Beda Pontifical University at which Morris-Chapman preached, a special service led by an ecumenical delegation from Finland, and one held at the Anglican Centre.

The week culminated with the traditional evening vespers led by Pope Francis in the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls. Pope Francis in his homily shared that "hospitality belongs to the tradition of Christian communities and families."

All the services explored in different ways the theme developed by the Malta churches for 2020, 'They showed unusual kindness', which is based on the experience of Paul's shipwreck on Malta. The theme presents obvious connections to contemporary migrant and refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and worldwide. This story challenges us: do we collude with the cold forces of indifference, or do we show "unusual kindness" and become witnesses of God's loving hope and grace to all people?

Franklin-Ross connected with a group of students from the Bossey Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, who were making a study visit to the Vatican. At the invitation of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, Franklin-Ross was a member for a panel discussion at the Angelicum Pontifical University. This is to mark the 25th anniversary of the encyclical letter of John Paul II *Ut unum sint*. This is the only papal encyclical entirely dedicated to ecumenism.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity invites all to gather as Christians to pray with Christ that "they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:21). The Week is traditionally held in January in the northern hemisphere, and between Ascension and Pentecost in the southern hemisphere; though the material can be used for an ecumenical prayer service at any time of the year. The World Methodist Council commends the resource <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/week-of-prayer> for local, regional and national Ecumenical events; whether held in the usual times, or any time that the opportunity avails.

Prepared by Rev. Tony Franklin-Ross



Pictured: (Left - Right) Tony Franklin-Ross (WMC Ecumenical Relations Chair), Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman (Minister for the Ponte San Angelo Methodist Congregation and acting Director of MEOR), Mirella Manocchio (President of Methodist Church in Italy) – at an ecumenical service led by Pope Francis.

Wesley House seeks Director of Practical/Contextual Theology

A Director of Practical/Contextual theology is sought for appointment by the Wesley House Trustee/Directors from 1 September 2020. Applications are invited from practical/contextual theologians with experience of qualitative research. The successful applicant will be committed to developing leadership and scholarship with/in the global Methodist family.

- Supervise international and UK research students working on contextual theological projects
- Play a key strategic role in the development of the college's work resourcing leadership and scholarship in the Wesleyan tradition
- Play a key role in the core staff team of the college as a College Officer
- Teach on the programmes of the college (online, short courses and programmes validated through the Cambridge Theological Federation and by other partners)

The post will be based at Wesley House in Cambridge and the post-holder is expected to be resident in Cambridge. The role will involve some UK and some overseas travel. The post-holder will be paid a salary of £33,000 pa. Wesley House will either make pension contributions of 10% into a personal pension scheme or will contribute to the Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme if the postholder is eligible for membership. The postholder is offered

rent-free use of one of Wesley House's on-site flats for the period of their appointment. There is an annual service charge which will be £2,372 in 2020/21. Free parking in central Cambridge for one car is also available.

The successful applicant must have a PhD in theology or a related discipline and will ideally have supervised doctoral students to completion. An ability to work with students to design contextually appropriate qualitative research projects is essential. Applicants should be members in good standing in a church eligible to belong to the World Council of Churches. Further details of the skills, qualifications and experience required are detailed in the job description.

Applications

The deadline for applications is 26 March 2020. Please send applications to: aio22@cam.ac.uk. Applications should include a full academic CV, details of 3 referees and a letter referencing the job description and person specification.

Wesley House is an equal opportunities employer.

Full details are at:
www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/about/dopt/

Nomination Forms available for committee chairs and officers

The World Methodist Council is open for 2021-2026 delegates to be nominated as Committee chairpersons or Officers. You must be a delegate in order to be nominated to be on a committee or elected as an officer.

Click on the following link to access these forms:

<https://worldmethodistcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/WMC-Chairperson-Nomination-Form-2021-2026.pdf>

<https://worldmethodistcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/WMC-Officer-Nomination-Form-2021-2026.pdf>

Prayer for peace on the Korean Peninsula

We pray to you, thinking of Koreans who have been hurt by long division and fear of war. Divided reality has given people unbelief and pains too long.

This reality is on-going suffering and it causes our pain and struggles in the communion of the global church.

Lord, Peace on the Korean peninsula is not just theirs. The peace of the world can be made closer through peace on the Korean peninsula.

Now, we join a campaign to remember the 70th year of Korean War and to engage the world churches for the support of peace treaty and reconciliation of North and South Korea. Bless this historic moment as the Korean church and the world church are joining again for this significant liberation and freedom.

Do you remember the many people who have lived a scissored life every day? How long, Lord?

Tears shed so long and it shed to all over the world, as they struggle and miss our separated family and friends.

We thanked the Lord to see the leaders of the South and the North Korea stopping the cold war and talk and exchange with such visionary stage. We thrill to see the Lord grant the initial step toward the peace to the Korean peninsula after seeing the leaders of North Korea and the United States meet and share a dream of reconciliation.

Lord, May you be a mediator. And create a relationship of reconciliation, not a tragedy and confrontation anymore.

Use your cross as a sign of the end of division and help us to begin to love one another. Help the Christians scattered around the world to share in the 2020 year for building the peace and reconciliation.

We pray earnestly in the name of the Lord. Amen

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, Presiding Bishop of Wisconsin Annual Conference and President of General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church

The above is a continuation of, “We Pray, Peace Now, End the War,” part of the Global Prayer Campaign for Peace on the Korean Peninsula from March 1 to August 15, 2020.

The World Methodist Council joins the Koreans and much of the world in asking for prayers for peace on the Korean Peninsula. During this year, 2020, we remember the beginning of the Korean War 70 years ago. Until today there is no formal end to this war, no peace treaty, only an armistice. We believe it is time for peace, time to end the war, time to demilitarize the Korean Peninsula. Let us join Christians in North and South Korea and around the world in praying and working for peace.



Pictured are Prayer Ribbons with messages of hope for the Korean Peninsula

President Park expresses gratitude to Nigerian Methodists

I have visited Methodist Church Nigeria from Feb 4 to Feb 17. From the bottom of my heart I am very grateful for the spiritual leadership of Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) and her Christian hospitality for me during my visit. Because of the well-organized followership throughout connectional system of MCN I have been blessed to reassure my high calling over and over again in many occasions from the various traditional receptions to the Enthronement Service of an archbishop. Indeed, I have learnt a lot from the people called Methodists in Nigeria full of the joy of life in the Holy Spirit.

In many places I was asked by reporters on the security matters in Nigeria. Methodist Church Nigeria has been the agent of peacemaking evangelism for a long time. The former President of WMC Prelate Emeritus Sunday Mbang of MCN is a great embodiment of peace, justice, and unity even across the differences of tribes, religions, and denomination. During my courtesy visit to his residence His Eminence shared his great vision

and wisdom and encouraged me to launch **The Presidential Legacy Circle** (see related article in this FFL) project through which we may set up an effective resource mobilization.



President J.C. Park (center) at the reception service in Nigeria.

Finally, I want to express my personal appreciations to His Eminence Prelate Uche, Secretary of Conference Bishop Akinwale, Archbishop Opoko, and Bishop Onuouha who have accompanied me throughout my apostolic journey full of joy and wonder. I thank and praise God that I could keep my promise to MCN to visit during my presidency. On Sunday before my departure I preached my sermon on “Satan’s Schemes” at the Methodist church of Tinubu, Lagos. I can witness that I was greatly empowered by the Holy Spirit during my preaching as the very attentive congregation also lively responded to the Word of God.

Africa Methodist Council to host Heads of Conferences Summit

All roads will lead to Kigali, Rwanda this March where the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda will host the first Head of Conferences Summit from **23-27 March 2020**.

The church leaders will deliberate about issues affecting the continent; the role of the church in alleviating challenges as well as consider the first draft of the council’s strategic plan as part of visioning for its future operations.

Two other meetings will run at the same time; the Communicators Roundtable and the Africa Methodist Youth Movement Leadership. For the former, the Communication Directors or officers for each Conference will meet to share ideas, create a network of communicators and fine tune communication strategy for the work of the council. For the latter meeting, two youth representatives from each Conference will meet from **26-30 March 2020** to talk about the challenges affecting the youth on the continent; share best practice and potential leadership.

The venue of the meetings will be the Good News Guest House, Gikondo St, Kigali, Rwanda and any inquiries can be directed to africamethcouncil@gmail.com.



Zimbabwe area plants church for prisoners, officers

The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is taking its prison ministries to the next level.

The Zimbabwe Episcopal Area has planted a church near the Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison, which houses men and women, and Zimbabwe Republic Police Support Unit to evangelize to inmates, officers and their families. This is the first church of its kind in the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area.

Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa gave the church circuit status in 2019 and appointed pastor, Edith Madora, to strengthen outreach at the prison. “The reason for planting the church is to bandage the wounds of inmates, officers, families and communities at large,” he said.

“Prison officers suffer psychologically because some inmates are very dangerous,” he said. “In addition, the economic doldrums faced by Zimbabwe have their effects. There are shortages of food, non-food items and failure to access good medication. This affects every person with a human heart; this includes officers,” said the Rev. Oscar Nyasha Mukahanana, Harare East District superintendent.

The officers and their families often are confined within the prison campus. “They need to interact with the world outside the camp environment. ... The children and youth participate in children’s ministries and young adult church activities so that they become part of the Christian society.” Assigning a pastor in charge has made outreach with the prison easier, Mukahanana said.



Bhero Munashe (left), Pastor in Charge Edith Madora and the Rev. Oscar Nyasha Mukahanana serve Holy Communion at Maximum Salvation United Methodist Church in Manresa, Zimbabwe. Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa granted the prison church circuit status in 2019. Photo by Kudzai Chingwe, UM News.

Tsitsi Winini, 22, a youth member from the Harare Central District, was among a group of youths who visited the women’s prison on Jan. 18. The United Methodist Youth Fellowship donated sanitary pads and evangelized to the women. “My heart was broken. I cried uncontrollably, seeing women younger than me, some pregnant and breastfeeding — one from South Africa had twins — walking barefooted. (The women) were bathing without soap and (had) no one visiting them.

“But (I am) hopeful that at the end of the tunnel, there is light,” said Winini, who serves as community service vice chairperson for the youth group. “As Christians we were challenged. We need to pray for them and advocate for justice to prevail and provide them with basic needs for a decent life and visit them often.”

Cranborne UMC in the Harare East District has been working with inmates for the past four years, tending to their physical and spiritual needs. The outreach started after a church member was incarcerated at Chikurubi Female Prison.

The Rev. Gift Kudakwashe Machinga, pastor in charge at Cranborne, said the church holds an annual event to allow prisoners — non-violent offenders or those who are nearing the end of their sentences — to lead worship and sing in the choir during service.

“The congregants have completely changed their perception of prisoners after listening to their testimonies,” Machinga said. “The stigma from the church on prisoners has been removed.” He said the team’s focus now is to identify prisoners’ families and their needs and find the best ways to assist. “We are to offer counseling services and assist in preparing prisoners for integration into the community after release from prison.”

Prison officers suffer a lot of abuse and stress from inmates, Gloria Tamakikwa, second officer in charge said, and they need to hear about the goodness of Christ. The male and female prisons and police unit provide fertile ground to win souls. The three institutions have a total population of around 8,000.

Tamakikwa reported when the church was without a pastor in charge, members missed out on activities and would receive Holy Communion only four times a year.

-- Read more at <https://www.umnews.org>

Tennessee tornadoes take lives, damage structures

More than 140 structures, which included churches, houses, and schools, were heavily damaged by a tornado which cut a 10-mile path through Middle Tennessee, USA on March 3. The nighttime twisters also claimed at least 24 lives, particularly in Putnam County, about 80 miles from Nashville, Tennessee. More than 150 of those injured were taken to hospitals in the area.

East End United Methodist Church had weathered storms before. When an F3 tornado ripped through East Nashville in 1998, it only managed to blow the sanctuary doors open. This time, the damage was more severe. “It’s in our DNA to be a church of open doors,” said the Rev. Judi Hoffman, East End’s co-pastor, “but they flew right off the hinges this time.” Hoffman, who lives in the parsonage attached to the church, had only enough warning to wake her husband, Matt, and dive into the bathtub. “You could hear it coming like a train,” she said.

When they ventured outside, they saw one exterior wall of the sanctuary completely gone, the children’s wing destroyed and part of the steeple laying in a yard across the street. The enormous stained-glass window on the front of the sanctuary, recently refurbished, is shattered. A 1907 organ original to the building was crushed under a fallen ceiling, its pipes in a chaotic tangle. Hoffman said church members and neighbors were on site at 4 a.m. clearing debris and cutting fallen trees. A neighbor returned one of the church’s crosses that had landed in her yard. “The compassion oozes out of this church and fills every space,” Hoffman said. She expressed gratitude that she could talk to the children about “how God is with us through all of this.”

Braden Memorial United Methodist, a historic African American church, also felt the force of the tornado. “I’m sitting inside the church where there’s a great deal of debris,” said Ricky V. Cole, lay leader, in a phone interview. “The windows to the front door were blown in.” Cole said the church lost its steeple and some of its stained-glass windows, and had exterior damage, particularly in the front. Besides debris that blew into the sanctuary, the back parking lot is full of debris from nearby townhouses blown down in the storm, Cole said. A wrought iron security fence was “taken out of the ground” he added.

In Hermitage, the tornado proved particularly devastating for historic Dodson Chapel United Methodist Church. “The church building itself is pretty much gone,” said the Rev. Chris Seifert, senior pastor of Hermitage United Methodist Church, a partner to Dodson Chapel. “It’s heartbreaking to look at.” Seifert said a former school building that has been home to the Dodson Chapel Child-care Center also was destroyed. He said the childcare center is vital to the community, serving about 150 children, some from low-income families. “It’s going to hurt a lot of people in that way,” he said.

Dodson Chapel United Methodist’s roots go back to 1812, and its sanctuary dated to 1906. In recent years, attendance had dwindled, and most who came were seniors, Seifert said.

In Putnam County, a tornado touched down around 2 a.m. between the city limits of Cookeville and Baxter, cutting a 2-mile path. By evening on March 3, the death toll had risen to 18, with dozens of others treated for injuries. In addition to Putnam County and Nashville, fatalities were reported in Benton and Wilson counties.

Resident Bishop William T. McAlilly said he’s already fielded calls from other states and from bishops throughout the denomination. The United Methodist Committee on Relief has approved a \$10,000 sustainability grant for the conference’s tornado response.

“This is a moment when the church is the church, and we will do the right thing, whatever we can. There will be people from all over the country and the world who will respond to our people here, all because we’re United Methodists and we’re connected and that’s what we do,” the bishop said.

“People have no idea what the power of the connection is until you have a disaster like this. Where would we be without it?” Every church in the area has offered worship space to East End, Hoffman said. This coming Sunday, however, the congregation will worship in the church’s park adjacent to the sanctuary — the same park where the first services were held before the sanctuary was built in 1907.

Outside the church, neighborhood volunteer Sumant Joshi swept debris out of the street with a broom. He wore a shirt emblazoned with the words “Inspire hope.” “It felt like the perfect shirt to wear to work today,” he said.



Dodson Chapel United Methodist Church is among the many area structures devastated by a March 3 tornado. Photo by the Rev. Chris Seifert.

Epworth Old Rectory in collaborative study with Hull University

Dr. Ruth Slatter PhD, a lecturer in Human Geography, and Dr. Hannah Worthen PhD, a researcher at Hull University began a collaborative research project, funded by the British Academy, with Epworth Old Rectory in September 2019 examining the way that women used material objects in the Methodist Church. The planning started in September, but Hannah is now working one day each week at the Rectory examining objects from the women's collection and archive which is now permanently housed at Epworth.

The subtitle for the study is "Jumpers, Umbrellas and Plastic Bags" which underlines the fact that they aren't just looking at flower arrangements and other items made specifically for use in the church. They are examining the everyday objects and materials used by women in the Methodist church for all sorts of different reasons, essentially the questions are what is it, who made/used it, for what purpose and why. What effect it had on the women and on the church will probably be taken into account too as the project develops.

Some of the items from the Methodist Women's collection to be studied, included the banners which were used by the Rectory for the "Over the Rainbow" exhibitions

of 2018 and 2019, but will also include other items such as the plastic bags with the Network logo on the front. In the picture Ruth is holding the bag, and Hannah just one of the banners. Both of them found it fascinating that the women who made some of the banners actually wrote their names in pen to show who had been involved in the making, and the day of action in London.

Epworth Old Rectory are pleased to be involved in this study as it will highlight the female role in the church, which is often overlooked, and because the story of the Rectory and the Wesleys really centres around Susanna, the mother of John and Charles, who is hidden in the shadow of her more famous sons.

If there are any women out there, who have a story to tell about their relationship with the material objects and their church, or even just their belief system and want to share that story, please do contact Ruth and Hannah who will be very pleased to hear from you. Contact them through Hull University, Ruth's e-mail is r.slatter@hull.ac.uk

Prepared by Cath Fordham (Press Officer EOR)

Retired teachers answer call to missions in Papua New Guinea

Three retired teachers have accepted a call to missions in Papua New Guinea (PNG), embracing life outside of the United States and all of the challenges that come with it.

Kathy Smedley was always interested in missions, but she had never been outside of the US except for brief trips over the Mexican and Canadian borders. Two doctors from Kudjip Nazarene Hospital in PNG spoke at her church and shared about a critical need for teachers in their school for missionary children. "I had not thought of doing such a thing," Smedley said. "But I felt God speak to me, asking me, 'Why couldn't you do that?'"

Joyce Dierking's is a retired teacher and widow, who felt God speak to her and she talked with the same missionaries who approached Smedley.

When Smedley first arrived, she contracted a parasite. While she is now doing better, she still struggles with the unfamiliar foods.

Despite the challenges, Dierking enjoys the opportunity to instill a love for God's word in the children at a young age. "I began Bible quizzing when I was in 7th grade and then coached Bible quiz teams for many years throughout my adult life," Dierking said. "Now it is my joy and privilege to instill in these missionary children a deep love for God's Word."

Smedley enjoys the relationship between students, teachers, and their parents. "It is a relationship unlike anything I've ever had in the U.S. in public school," Smedley said. "Mothers will bring their toddlers and preschoolers to the playground for recess and we all have time to visit."

Dierking and Smedley suggested those who want to get involved in missions should pursue God's voice while actively seeking to learn more about missions. "There are so many needs for different skills on the field," Smedley said. "If a person can afford to go as a volunteer for a few months, it helps to see if this is really God's will for them."

To learn more about Nazarene Missions and how to get involved, [click here](#).

--Church of the Nazarene Asia-Pacific Region



Joyce Dierking's says teaching in Papua New Guinea is a privilege



We welcome your press releases, articles and resources! Please keep submissions to less than a page. We also ask that all stories are written, edited and ready to publish. Please contact us by **the last Monday of the month** at communications@worldmethodistcouncil.org if you would like your story to be included in our next edition of the First Friday Letter.

We Are On the Web

This and past First Friday Letters can be found online at FirstFridayLetter.worldmethodistcouncil.org.

The World Methodist Council's website may be found at worldmethodistcouncil.org.

The World Methodist Museum's website is at methodistmuseum.org.

To subscribe to this newsletter, please email communications@worldmethodistcouncil.org.

About the First Friday Letter

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