



Dear Friends,

After having read through the newsletter, which highlights events in the British Union Women's Ministries, it dawned on me that most of what is happening has to do with spreading the good news of Jesus. And to be honest that is what women's ministries is about. It is not about keeping our women members happy, entertaining them and giving them a good time. Although this is healthy for all of us because laughter actually does a lot of good in a positive way. But when we are happy and have been feed spiritually we need to actually get out there and help other women experience what it is to be happy in Jesus.

When exciting things happen in our lives: birth of a child, surgery that went well, a new job, we all tell everyone we meet about it. We are so excited we can't contain ourselves. In a world that is scared, has no hope and feels there is no way out we have a wonderful message and we should be yelling it from the rooftops.

When you read Romans 5:6-11 (The Message Bible) it describes what Jesus has done for us and notice verse 11 and you will understand what I mean.

6-8 Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.

9-11 Now that we are set right with God by means of this sacrificial death, the consummate blood sacrifice, there is no longer a question of being at odds with God in any way. If, when we were at our worst, we were put on friendly terms with God by the sacrificial death of his Son, now that we're at our best, just think of how our lives will expand and deepen by means of his resurrection life! Now that we have actually received this amazing friendship with God, we are no longer content to simply say it in plodding prose. We sing and shout our praises to God through Jesus, the Messiah!

Everything we experience on this earth is temporary but the Good News of Jesus is for eternity. Let's keep shouting it from the rooftops and let's live our lives in such a way that not only words are necessary.

Blessings to you all and enjoy the newsletter,

Clair

News from the British Union



Sharon Platt-McDonald
Women's and Health Ministries Director, BUC

Welcome once again to our BUC Women's Ministries report where we spotlight some of the initiatives and events around the Union since our last update.

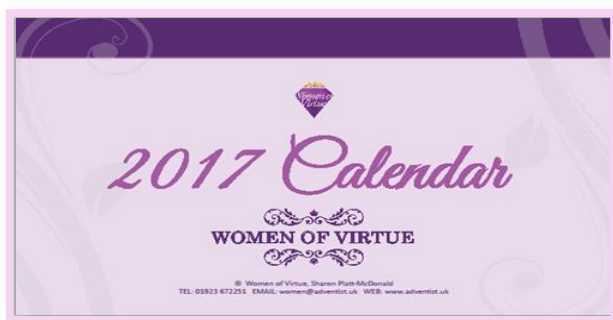
We extend a special welcome to Pastor Maslin Holness, who was appointed Women's Ministries Director for the South England Conference (SEC) in 2015 and Beulah Plunkett appointed director for Women's Ministries for the North England Conference (NEC).

First of all here are some highlights from our Women's Ministries department at the British Union:

BUC Women of Virtue Volunteers Training event

The British Union Conference Women of Virtue (WOV) programme entered a new phase on Sunday 23rd October when it expanded its function to include training volunteers how to use the programme as a ministry and outreach intervention. Launched in April 2014 the programme based on the Godly and productive life of the Proverbs 31 woman set out to inspire women to excellence in every facet of their lives.





Reflecting on how the WOV programme fits in with the SEC focus on evangelism Pastor Holness states:

“The programme was designed to help the volunteers learn more about the intricacies of the programme, how it can be used in churches and communities as an evangelistic tool to draw women and families to Christ.”

The Women of Virtue Calendar is one of the latest products of the programme. This was launched at the training event.

Capturing the training environment Pastor Maslin reports:

“The atmosphere was indeed filled with God’s presence as we begun the day with praise and worship. The morning really culminated as the WOV National Board Members shared their personal experiences as to what the programme had done for them. In the afternoon there was a beautiful buzz in the room as the ladies worked in teams to set up each of the segments they have chosen in a creative way supported by the National Board Members. “



Women's Ministries News



Reading the evaluations from the attendees captured the extent of the training. Here are just a few respondents:

"The programme content was excellent. The programme was broken down very well. I loved Evangelism Outreach and Community Activist. The material was very well presented and packed with relevance."

"The content was excellent! Excellent! I have always wanted to give something for women due to my experiences. This is it!"

"This was a fab day. The programme was very inspiring, very informative, and I have received a blessing. Everything was well planned and in order."

"Thank you Sharon and also your amazing team. Had a blessed time together. We all left with gems of wisdom. You have empowered us to go even further with God's message. May God continue to bless you and give you endurance to complete His work."





Ministry boxes training launch at SEC Women's Ministries leadership conference

October 23rd saw the launch of the Ministry Boxes created by Sharon Platt-McDonald. The initial boxes were created to reflect the 6 prevailing issues impacting women globally outlining contents to address the challenges and bring hope. These were demonstrated on the day with guidance notes on how to assemble the box.

Other boxes were developed to reflect the emotional and social aspects of a woman's life and how we can use the ministry boxes to nurture our women and as outreach tools to the community. One specific box received a lot of interest and demonstrated the practical elements of the Proverbs 31 woman's life.



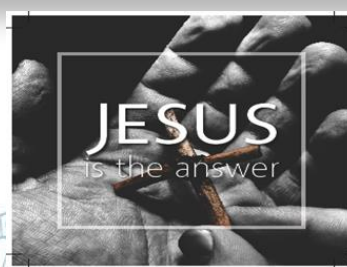
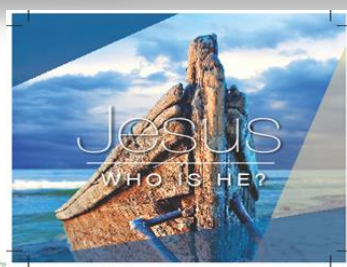
Of particular interest was the Community Activist box based on the Proverbs 31:20 which reads: "She reaches out her hands to the needy...."

This entailed instructions on how to use the ministry box highlighting issues relating to poverty and justice which included items to assist individuals in need, information on advocacy, and other inspirational items and useful gifts to empower women.

New publications

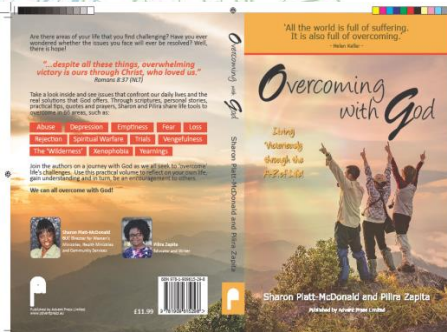
The following mini-booklets were produced for outreach ministry:

This Forgiveness publication to expand the Forgiveness as Healing course. For spiritual outreach and nurture the Jesus series was produced.



Overcoming with God

This book is our latest publication and deals with 66 areas of challenges and how we can overcome them with the help of God.





Coming events:

At the time of writing our forthcoming BUC events are:

- Women's Ministries Wellness Retreat – May 21st – 26th
- Girls for Christ and Creative Bible Studies Training May 28th
- WM training / presentation at the SEC Camp and NEC Camp Meetings – June 19th – 25th and June 26th – July 2nd
- August 27th – Launch of Esther Institute of Excellence for Young Ladies
- October 13th – 15th – BUC Women's Ministries Retreat
- November 24th – 26th – Leadership Level 2 Training

Women's Ministries events in the South England Conference (SEC)

Director: Maslin Holness

During 2016, SEC Women's Ministries department focused their attention on addressing the local conference area needs as well as sharing the department's overall strategy.

Women's Ministries Retreat

In May 2016, Pastor Maslin Holness hosted a Women's Retreat at the Selsdon Park Hotel; Croydon entitled "Women Inspiring Women." One hundred and eighty women were in attendance. At the retreat, the Woman of Virtue Programme was launched for the SEC and Pastor Maslin Holness was inaugurated as the SEC Chapter leader for the programme.



A detailed presentation was made by Sharon Platt-McDonald, Founder of the programme & BUC Women's Ministries, Health & Adventist Community Services Director. We were Also in attendance was Guest speaker Dr Olive Hemmings, from Washington Adventist University and Sophia Nicholls SEC Disability Ministries & Diversity Director.

School of Evangelism

On 11th June we celebrated the achievements of ten women who graduated from the School of Evangelism 'Woman to Woman'. This was a leadership training program for women who wanted to learn skills in community outreach and evangelism.



Kid's Club

During August 2016 a Fun Club was held for 6-13 year olds at the Hyland House School, Tottenham (8-19th August). The aim of this project is to give some support to parents during the summer holidays when the help and support is at its greatest need.



Margaret Watson from the Balham SDA church taught the children basic sewing skills and they made lovely cushions proudly displayed as you can see in the photo. Children from the local church & community attended.



Women's Ministries Leadership Conference

This took place 9th October and was captioned: "For Such a Time As This: A Call To Action For Women" with guest speaker Jackie Lynton, NEC Community Ministries, Health & Disability Director. Fifty women attended the Conference at the Advent Centre where they gained skills, tips, shared insights and were challenged on their thinking to terms of ministry.



Effective Communication Skills Training

On 24th October 2016 we ran an Effective Communication Skills course. This is a pilot course focusing on three areas (a) to build confidence in communication, (b) goal setting, identifying values & spiritual gifts and (c) a sociological perspective on women, faith & culture.

2017 focus

The theme for 2017 under the SEC Evangelism Everyone Everywhere strategy was Restoration. The SEC Women's Ministries department chose to address issues of Women's Health & Emotional Wellbeing.

Holiday Fun Club

A Holiday Fun Club was run during the half term school break February (13th - 17th) at the Hyland House School for families who really need additional child care support during school holidays. Nineteen children attended the club from the church and community.



Women's Ministries Tea Party

Sunday 19th February was the first SEC Women's Ministries Tea Party at Balham Church. The hall was transformed by Harper Events London into a beautiful setting for afternoon tea, cakes and fun. The department took the opportunity to introduce the Area 6B's Women's Advisory Team: ReForM, (Ready for Ministry). Although the tea party was a time of social interaction, three emotional health topics were addressed: anger, guilt and rejection by presenters Marlene Levy, an experienced counsellor and Leslene Peat-Brown a psychologist.



Domestic Abuse training

Tuesday 21st February 2017 ushered in the first Domestic Abuse training course for Women's Ministry Leaders and interested parties. This was hosted by Dr Bianca Petrova from Women's Aid and Saphra Ross (Hackney Church), Assistant Trainer for Women's Aid. Dr Bianca is an experienced lecturer/trainer with some 30 years of working with women and men living with Domestic Abuse. Those who attended said that it was a thorough and well presented introduction to Domestic Abuse giving the attendee's information and tips how they can support victims of Domestic Abuse.

Area Leadership training

Area 7's Women's Ministries Leaders training commenced at St Albans church on 26th February 2017. This was a combined refresher course for some leaders and an introduction for new leaders. We solicit your prayers as we continue to listen and support women throughout the SEC.

Under the dedicated leadership of Pastor Maslin Holness the SEC Women's Ministries department has supported countless churches during the prayer breakfasts, women's day, and the End it now domestic violence emphasis across the SEC. They have also supported women and families with personal home visits, counselling and pastoral support.

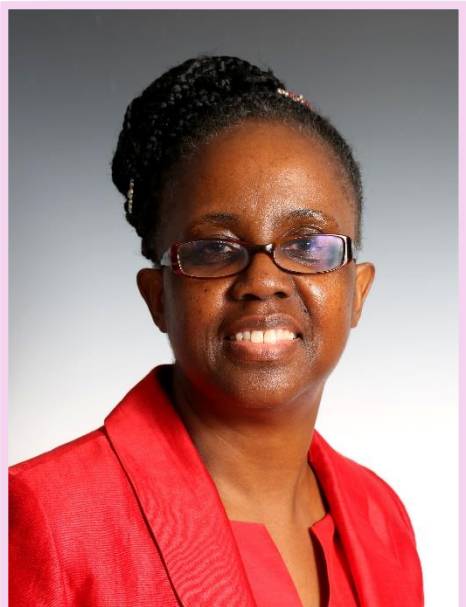
We thank God for the faithful leadership of Pastor Maslin and her team.

-Sharon Platt-McDonald





Women's Ministries events in the North England Conference (NEC)



Director: Beulah A. Plunkett

Since coming into office in 2017, this being my first term as Women's Ministries Director and my third term as Sabbath School Director, I have delivered the following Women's Ministries Training and Events:

1) Induction Training for new WM leaders - 15th January 2017.

This well attended, NEC-wide training event set out to prepare newly elected Women's Ministries leaders for their role in the local churches. The focus being in the NEC that every department seeks to 'Extend God's Kingdom'. The WM vision statement: 'Women called by God to Ministry and to Service' was shared showing the leaders that they had to reach in as well as reach out. Resources were given out to help them plan and collect data about the women in their churches and ideas shared on how to get started. Sharon Platt-McDonald also presented on a new initiative the Esther Institute of Excellence.

2) Leadership Level1 Training - 22nd & 29th January 2017 – This Area training was delivered to cover the 7 areas of the NEC. The training built upon the Induction training, and gave leaders insight into Biblical leadership and the practicalities of leadership. A handbook was given out in a newly created WM Leader's pack, that is still being developed further as needs are identified. The women welcomed the opportunity to explore drawing up a vision and making it real through setting goals, they also examined challenging scenarios and discussed strategies.



3) **Women Together Conference - 7th May 2017** – This event was NEC-wide and drew women from all the areas of the NEC and from the SEC and Welsh Mission. The aim of this Conference was for women to come together and bring their friends from the community with them, to share experiences and witness to them. The theme was: 'Women can and Women do'. This was realised through our range of speakers and workshops. The NEC Women Together Conference held on the 7th May 2017 at the Nottingham Village hotel, sold out. The women came and the women were inspired, enthused and encouraged by outstanding, exceptional and highly motivated women speakers and workshop presenters who can and do amazing work in their field.



The day started with a man and a woman; our president Pastor Richard Jackson, who gave the devotional, on the significance and importance of women in Israel, and sister Angela Jackson, who shared with us her work with the Ministerial Spouses Association. This dynamic couple set a great example of what 'couples can do for the Lord'. This will be another theme that we will explore in the future.



Women's Ministries News



Our speakers and presenters were from a range of backgrounds and spoke on topics that would ignite interest. Pastor Patricia Douglas spoke on the steps to ministry – her journey with God as she answered the call to ministry; the challenges and the joys that yielding to the call to become a minister for Christ Jesus, took her through. Sister Lorraine Dixon Head of Stanborough school, talked about being 'Fearless and Adventurous'. Her journey made the women gasp! Her sheer determination and courageous spirit was the stuff of dramas. Sister Selo Karbah told the women 'you can start and run your own business, I did!' The women heard the real process, the hidden possibilities and the daily commitment involved. Sister Ruthlyn South ran a workshop on 'looking after your natural hair as God would have it'. The women flocked to this workshop in the afternoon, with products on sale and plenty of practical advice. Sister Joanna Daniel, a qualified counsellor ran a workshop on the 'healing after...'

As a counsellor she was able also to hold a few one-to-one sessions throughout the day, much appreciated by the women. Sister Beulah Plunket Women's Ministries Director, has been a Life Coach for many years. She ran a workshop on Personal and Spiritual development. The women were taken through the wheel of life, briefly to illustrate the way a Life coach can help them address life planning; personal and spiritual. The women were fascinated by how clear a perspective they got from just examining their current life situation. We were further blessed throughout the day by our very own singing evangelist, Sister Victoria Agyepong. She started the day with Praise Him that silenced the room as they listened to the depth of her message.





4) My Area Coordinator's Team have also delivered the annual: Women's International Days of Prayer 2017 across five of the 7 Areas of the NEC

Area 2 - 25th March -Greta Adams

Area 3 - 4th March - Faith Muimo

Area 4 - 11th March - Iris John

Area 5 - 11th March - Lenore Tulloch & Marva Cunningham

Area 7 - 15th April - Patience Chiketero

Each report came back positive. The women came by the hundreds and were blessed as the speakers which included Sharon Platt-McDonald, gave them real avenues to an enriched prayer life. They explored 'Fearless Faith' and one report talked about how they were enthralled by an interesting mission entitled 'Letter to my 18 year old self'.

Greta Adams said in her report: Area 2 had a Spirit filled day of prayer as women individually came with their burdens before God. This was witnessed by the language of tears shown while songs, and prayers were said. We were blessed by the presence of the preacher who is also gifted in prayer, from Milton Keynes, by the name of Sophia Munangati. The event was held at Hough End Centre in the South of Manchester which holds about 250 guests. We had an attendance of about 185 ladies who came from all areas of Area 2. The meeting started at 10.00am and ended 16.30pm.

Faith Muimo said in her report: The Area 3 WIDOP was held on Sabbath 4th March 2017 at Leeds Beckett University, over 165 ladies attended the event. On arrival each lady was given a gift bag. The University Chaplin Melvyn Kelly welcomed and prayed for the women. The theme for the week's readings had been Passionate Prayers, Fearless Faith. These readings were written by Sis Rudo Chengeta (Bradford Women's Ministries Leader) and extracts from women of the Bible devotion by Faith Muimo the readings included Jehosheba, Hannah, Anna.

Sis Hyacinth Gayle was the speaker for the morning. Her sermon "It takes Faith was based around the story of Hannah found in 1 Samuel 1:1-18.

- Beulah A. Plunkett