

Girls Friendly Society

21st World Council
25th July - 4th August
University of Swansea, Swansea, Wales

Outline of Events

Friday 25th July – Welcome

Glenys said that there would be a book for people to enter names of GFS members who have died since the last Council and those members who are unwell.

Our World Chaplain, Rev. David Payne asked everyone to stand for a minute's silence in memory of those who have died.

Glenys asked people to let Hannah know if there were any birthdays or anniversaries during World Council.

Glenys then gave housekeeping notes and explained about the buildings we would use. She apologised for the building work going on around Fulton House. She also explained what was in the conference bags and how to obtain World conference t-shirts.

Information was given about the arrangements for the journey to Brecon and for the Opening Service. Glenys also explained what would be happening on Sunday morning. Service times for local churches were available if anyone wished to attend these services.

An informal meeting for the Delegates took place when the delegate packs were handed out and Glenys briefly explained how Council sessions would be run.

The young people present meet with Poppy Winks, Frances Payne and Hannah Charlesworth to talk about events during Council.

Evening Worship was led by the World Chaplain, Rev. David Payne.

Saturday 26th July

Opening Service

All present travelled by coach to Brecon Cathedral for the opening service of the 21st Council. The celebrant and preacher was Rt. Rev. John Davies, Bishop of Swansea & Brecon.

Evening

A Welsh evening of entertainment was organised by Nerys & Nia plus friends who provide entertainment at banquets at Cardiff Castle

Evening Worship was led by the World Chaplain, Rev. David Payne.

Sunday 27th July

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Australia with Rev. Cheryl Selvage, as celebrant.

There was free time before the first Session of Council at 3pm

Evening

Entertainment was provided by Tipyn o Bopeth (Welsh Folk Dancers). As well as demonstrating various dances they also encouraged everyone to take part.

Evening Worship was led by England

Monday 28th July

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Papua New Guinea with Father Isaiah Masida as celebrant.

Session 2 & 3 held in the morning

Session 4 held after lunch.

Session 5 Discussion Groups

Evening

A disco with photos of previous World Councils and Scenes of the area.

Evening Worship

Tuesday 29th July

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Australia with Bishop Kay Goldsworthy as celebrant.

AM – Sessions 6

PM – Sessions 7 & 8

Evening Worship was led by Sri Lanka.

Wednesday 30th July

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Rev. Tim Williams, Conference Chaplain as celebrant.

Delegates and Observers travelled to Cardiff to visit the Senedd the home of the Welsh Assembly. The visit was sponsored by Ann Jones who was unable to be present due to illness. The Children's Commissioner for Wales, Mr. Keith Towler addressed the group and talked about his role. The young people then had a tour of the Senedd building.

Afterwards the group went to the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagans. In the evening groups of delegates visited Felinfoel, Penllergaer, Gorseinon and Killay where food and entertainment was provided.

Thursday 31st July

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by USA with Rev. Rowena Kemp as celebrant.

AM Session 9

Session 10 **Guest Speaker: Rev. Rose Hudson-Wilkin.**

Rose spoke about her childhood in Jamaica where she was a GFS member and that from age 14 she had an overwhelming sense of being called to ministry.

She came to England to study as a Church Army Officer and became a Lay Evangelist.

One of the influences in her life was a poster “Do not go where the path leads. Go where there is no path and leave a trail”.

Ordained in the Lichfield Diocese she moved to London where she received opposition in her first parish. Having made it clear that she was there to stay the congregation started to grow in numbers.

In addition to being a priest ministering to two congregations she is Chaplain to the Queen and Speaker’s Chaplain to the House of Commons.

Her message to GFS: what we must do to engage young people in a world where we compete with e.g. internet, what is the GFS Unique Selling Point, what are the issues faced by the age group that will connect them to us.

We must listen to the next generation and not impose our ideas, helping them to face the issues of the day. We must teach them to think about others, not just themselves, to think about what is happening to children in the trouble spots of the world. To make our young people aware of the importance of having an education – lobby MPs to speak out about countries where girls are not educated. To include boys in our conversations to help them see what it is like to be a young woman and how to treat them, to teach boys self-restraint and self-respect. To speak out about female genital mutilation and arranged marriages at a young age.

Our responsibility is to teach young women how to bear themselves, making the vision of women being equal happen so that seeing a woman in high positions is not seen as exceptional and to be applauded.

We must consider what GFS is doing between World Councils in our local organisations. How we can keep in our vision the stories of young girls and make them our stories.

“No limitations rule my efforts. I will achieve. I will excel. I will overcome obstacles and I have the potential for greatness”.

PM – free time

Evening

Each country took their turn to entertain at the Skit Night.

Evening worship was led by Rev. Tim Williams, conference Chaplain

Friday 1st August

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Australia with Rev. Sonia Roulston as celebrant.

Session 11

Session 12 4. Guest Speaker: Right Rev. John Davies, Bishop of Swansea & Brecon

Bishop John had celebrated and preached at the Opening Eucharist in Brecon Cathedral.

Bishop John talked about sowing seed. He mentioned Psalm 126 and that sowing the seed and harvesting are hard work. He then went on to talk about the Parable of the Sower and the need for careful preparation for sowing the seed. Seed is valuable and has great potential.

We need to pay careful attention to each other and remember that we all Christian people come from the same stable.

As members of GFS we should consider ourselves as sowers. If we look at the origins of GFS we see that Mary Townsend was a woman of faith and her vision led her to do great things. This work bore great fruit. The organisation has accomplished much.

Like the sower the GFS breaks new ground and tries to remove obstacles and allow growth.

Great work is yet to be done – possibly with other organisations.

He concluded by praying that GFS would be fruitful, careful, prayerful and loving in all we do.

Glenys thanked Bishop John for giving us much food for thought.

The **International Day** was held in the afternoon.

Evening

Entertainment was provided by Dunvant Male Voice Choir with Elizabeth Bevan (Soloist)

Evening worship was led by the Young People.

Saturday 2nd August

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Zambia with Rev. Robert Sihubwa celebrating.

5. Guest Speaker: Lynne Tembey, Mothers' Union Worldwide President.

Lynne started by thanking GFS for the invitation to speak and for starting her journey of faith as she had been a member of GFS as a girl.

She told us about her journey with the MU which began when newly married. Someone from the MU talked to her about the organisation and she thought about joining. Although she thought the MU sounded like a brilliant group she was reluctant to go to the meeting but was encouraged by her husband and has been a member ever since. The MU has give her amazing opportunities and has opened many doors. She said the golden thread throughout her life has been God being there.

When she became World President her 7 year old granddaughter said that Nana has the whole world in her hands! Lynne said she does have some help from friends!

Lynne explained that there are 16 people plus herself on the MU Trustee Board. Six of these trustees represent different areas of the World. The board meets twice a year for five days to discuss strategy and activities. Later this year 34 Provincial Presidents will meet for 7 days.

Mary Sumner who founded the MU in 1876 saw a need in the society of her time and put faith into action which is what MU members still do today.

MU members are involved in many different projects including

- ⑩ Providing virtual babies for use in schools in Salisbury diocese
- ⑩ Bye Bye Childhood Campaign
- ⑩ Literacy and Financial Development Programme in Burundi, Ethiopia, Malawi, Sudan and South Sudan
- ⑩ AFIA (Away from it all holidays)
- ⑩ Family Life Programme in Uganda
- ⑩ and many, many more

Lynne said that the MU had a voice at the UN which helps to make some governments realise that women need to have a voice.

The MU website shows what work is done around the world.

Val Gribble thanked Lynne for talking to us and expressed the thought that GFS and MU should work closely together.

Nobantu suggested that once a member of GFS you are always a member and that many are members of both organisations. When she moved to Port Elm there was no GFS so she joined the MU and was then able to start a GFS branch. She ended by saying there is no conflict just partnership in Christ.

Glenys thanked Lynne for not only coming to talk to us but also for joining us and being part of our fellowship for a few days.

Evening

Entertainment was provided by Saxophone Group.

Evening worship was led by Ireland

Sunday 3rd August

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Australia with Archdeacon Michael Hillier as celebrant.

Closing service

2.00pm: The Closing Service and Commissioning of World President was held at St Mary's church, Swansea. The preacher was The Most Reverend Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales.

A reception given by the Lord Mayor of Swansea preceded the Gala Dinner.

Monday 4th August

Morning Eucharistic Worship was led by Wales with Rev David Payne as celebrant.