

women's ministries

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

2020.04 March 20, 2020

News from Women's Ministries Inter-European Division

Governments take drastic measures to slow down the spread of Covid-19



All Women's Ministries Events Cancelled

We live in a situation that requires everyone to adjust their habits. The current Covid-19 pandemic requires all citizens to respect the decisions of their governments, which have issued guidelines for the health and safety of their populations. The restriction of social contacts means a drastic change for our community life. As law-abiding citizens we follow the instructions of the local health authorities and other public or municipal authorities.

In Europe all church services have been suspended until further notice. This also means that events planned by the church, including Women's Ministries retreats have been cancelled. This means that in the coming weeks and months we will probably not have any news to report on this news site.

In these extraordinary circumstances we want to care for our brothers and sisters as well as offer neighborhood help for individuals and the elderly so that everyone is provided with the necessities of life.

We want to use the time when public and social life is limited especially for prayer, thanksgiving, intercession and Bible study. Let us pray accordingly for our families and neighbors, our churches and for our country.

Let us also take care of our own health through a holistic healthy lifestyle: Exercise in the fresh air (of course without close encounters), recharging our batteries in the sun, drinking plenty of water, hygiene, etc. This also includes that we feel especially safe in God during this time. With Colossians 2:2+3 (NIV) we want to say to you: "My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.." We wish you all God's protection and peace!

Special Message from Inter-European Division Women's Ministries Director



Covid-19 Crisis affects us all

Dear Sisters,

We live in a very turbulent time, the world is in the grip of COVID-19 and when you hear and read the news, it can be quite depressing. Fear, anxiety, panic, insecurity, and many questions dominate the scene. Even if you don't necessarily belong to the risk group, it affects us all. And we must follow the recommendations of the health authorities.

Here too, women are often the one who bear, worry, care, in the families, the caring professions, the service industries, etc.

I hope that this time will bring us closer together despite the necessary "social distancing". I

hope that we live the true, God-given values, as Christians, as Adventists, that we pass on our hope for the return of Jesus and with it our hope for a new world without sickness and death, without fear and anxiety.

We want to bring God's love to our fellow human beings through our actions, our care.

I am very sorry that all events had to be cancelled, especially because these are always times of togetherness and encouragement.

But be creative in this time to stay in contact with each other. Phone, SMS, Instant messaging, Skype etc. offer wonderful opportunities to share, pray together, study the Bible, discuss books, encourage and much more. Grateful for the modern media, we can now use them in service to others.

Be an Encourager,

A Hopegiver,

A Supporter,

A Comforter.

We'd like to hear from you: Tell us how you encourage others. What do you do? How do you spread kindness in these times? Share your stories with us on Facebook.

Dagmar Dorn, Women's Ministries Director, Inter-European Division

Level Plus Leadership Certification in Germany



Intensive Training Session just before Corona Virus Lockdown

It was a special gift that a group of women was able to meet in the Ammerseehäusern in Riederau/Dießen from March 12 to 15, 2020 for the Leadership Certification seminar for women "LevelPlus". The Corona crisis has also taken hold of us as a church, we are also affected by it and have to cancel events and services. Just in time we were able to meet and also celebrate a blessed divine service together.

At LevelPlus some special topics are dealt with intensively. There were four main topics: 'Among friends' with Heidi Albisser, 'Giving testimony - but how?' with Gabriele Stangl, 'Visions and goals' with Brigitte Grohrock and 'Leading successfully' with Angelika Pfaller.

After a detailed introduction to the topic 'Among Friends - from Problem to Decision', the participants practiced this conversation form very intensively in groups of two, using personal examples. It was interesting to see how many a personal challenge or personal problem was solved. But most importantly, the intent was to help and accompany friends in solving their problems without offering a solution ourselves.

We have noticed again and again that some people in this day and age find it difficult to speak about their faith in our wonderful Jesus. How do we find unbiased personal words without overwhelming others? And that in a short and concise way? With stories and practical exercises Gabriele Stangl led the participants through this topic.

Do we have visions and goals? Do we implement projects realistically? How do we do that? Examples from the past included Dr. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. Through their courage and commitment, the living situation of the afro-american population gradually improved. Visions and goals, as well as their implementation, are especially important today. Politics and economy today are shaped by women in leading positions. In the Bible we find women in the Old and New Testament who led, e.g. Deborah, Esther, Abigail, LydiaFrom

the beginning women have played a role in our church. First of all, Ellen G. White and her friend through correspondence and first director of the women's department, Sarepta Myranda Irish Henry. Dr. Ella Simmons is currently the only vice president of the World Church leadership. The theme 'Leading Successfully' was developed to explore what it means to be 'called' to leadership service and how to lead successfully at all levels of our church. More than 60% of the members of our church are women, and this should be reflected in the governing bodies of our church, from the congregational level up to our worldwide church leadership.

Between the seminar sessions, the spring weather could be enjoyed on walks along the Ammersee lake. Once again, the staff of the house scored with their friendliness and very good food. It was once again an a perfect long weekend. Many thanks to all who contributed and participated.

Angelika Pfaller, WM Director, South and North German Unions; Photos: WM SDV

Change in the Leadership of Women's Ministries in the South German Union



Years of Service recognized

On March 14, 2020, we bid farewell to two leaders of the Women's Ministries department at Conference level during the LevelPlus training weekend.

Since the summer of 2012, Barbara Mahler has been the leader of Women's Ministries for the Bavarian Conference (BYV). At her own request, she now ended her service on February 29, 2020. During the past 7 ½ years, in addition to her full-time employment in a company, she has been an empathetic contact person for the concerns of women of all age groups. She organized and carried out events such as women's weekend retreats, meetings, Girls4Christ days. With an information booth she was represented at national youth events and

conferences. As far as possible she was supported by her team. Barbara came to women's breakfast meetings as a speaker and advised groups who wanted to start women's ministries in their church district. How will it continue in Bavaria? Unfortunately there is no new leader in sight for the time being.

There is also a change in the Mid Rhine Conference (MRV) in the Women's Ministries Department. Brigitte Grohrock, who has led the women's department of the MRV since August 1, 2014, will also end her ministry for women at her own request on March 31, 2020. District Sabbaths, meetings and weekend retreats for women, contacts with women in the congregations as well as the support of local groups were a part of her work, which always gave her joy and which she enriched with her pleasant manner. Girls4Christ is also part of the women's department. Brigitte also served beyond the borders of the conference as a speaker at the continuing education seminars of the Women's Ministries Department of the North German and South German Unions.

As of April 1, 2020 Daniela Canedo has now provisionally been appointed leader of the Women's Ministries department. Full of joy and new ideas, she is looking forward to starting this new task. Dany is also assistant to the executive board in the office of the Mid Rhine Conference. She is also known from various programs on Hope Channel, such as "Ungeschminkt" and "Wertvoll".

To Barbara and Brigitte I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for their great commitment, which, in addition to their marginal employment, they have also contributed to a large extent on a voluntary basis. Thank you for the time we spent together on this path.

I wish Dany a wealth of ideas and a good start in her new job.

The Lord bless the three of you on every new path.

Angelika Pfaller, WM Director for the South German Union

Photo: WM SDV From left to right: Angelika Pfaller, Barbara Mahler, Daniela Canedo and Brigitte Grohrock

Women in Leadership Award in Trans-European Division



Audrey Andersson's surprise award on International Women's Day

Audrey Andersson, Executive Secretary of the Trans European Division received a Women in Leadership Award at a special ceremony to celebrate International Women's Day, 8 March 2020 at Stanborough Park Adventist Church, Watford, England.

Andersson was a keynote speaker at the event and confesses she was totally surprised to also find herself as an award recipient. "Being a woman in leadership is an amazing journey, a challenging journey, a roller coaster journey; a journey which is at times gruelling, but ultimately is rewarding and offers opportunities I never imagined," she told participants.

Having enjoyed a career in publishing and communication before becoming the Executive Secretary of the Swedish Union Conference, Andersson became the first and currently the only female Executive Secretary of the 13 World Divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. "This year's hashtag is #EachforEqual, or creating the reality where we are not talking of male and female leaders, rather just leaders," she emphasised, noting that a gender balance in leadership allows for a richer variety of gifts and abilities to be brought to the table.

Andersson was joined by Vicki Costello, General Manager of Watford's Intu Shopping Centre. Costello started working for a clothing retailer and, passing through a Customer Services route, became one of just four females out of Intu's 18 managers.

"Both women gave inspiring talks detailing their own rise to leadership in what was formerly a man's world and encouraging girls to widen their horizons and accept that anything is possible," stated Enock Kanageraj, organiser of the event.

Perhaps the most memorable person to receive the award was 86-year-old Barbara Hankin who must be Hertfordshire's oldest 'Lollipop Lady'. She has stood outside Leavesden Green Primary School in Watford in all weathers for the past 11 years helping children and their carers across the road. She knows all the children's names and is much loved by them all. She also finds the time to be a prison visitor and is a regular member of the Church's Singing Group which visits different care homes each Sabbath afternoon. Many residents are a lot younger than her! Barbara is the mother of TED receptionist, Geraldine Hankin with whom she shares the same positive, caring spirit. She was one of two women to receive a Lifetime Achievement award.

The event provided Stanborough Park Church with an opportunity to engage with the local community through its 'One Vision' project, led by church member Enoch Kanagaraj. The project has brought together a large number of local groups and charities as an 'action group' which aims to 'share resources and skills and provide training, empower communities, raise funds and create a better everyday life in the town. It provides a forum for members to network, exchange ideas, share information and skills, support each other and provide a voice for the disadvantaged. As the group meet monthly in The Stanborough Centre, the church naturally hosted the well-attended occasion.

Ten women were presented with a 'Community Impact Award', recognising the contributions they made to the local community. This included a now-retired former TED staff member, Pat Walton. She was recognised for her fundraising skills, setting up the weekly Soup Run, which has been serving London's homeless for three decades, taking over and running the Emergency Furniture Unit before it came under the umbrella of the area's Community Services and rebranded as 'Nine Lives' charity of which she is trustee, and, especially, organising the church's highly-regarded Welfare Service and Annual Toy Service providing toys for disadvantaged local children at Christmas.

A second 'Lifetime Achievement Award' was presented to Alicia Shaw, who has recently retired from her role as a Chief Inspector Hertfordshire police force – the first woman from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community. She was also a hostage negotiator in the process and finding herself being called out at all times of the day and night dealing with potential suicides.

Presenting the awards were Watford MP, Dean Russell; the local Mayor Peter Taylor; Deputy Chief Officer for Hertfordshire Constabulary Michelle Dunn; and Julian Rickman Regional Manager for Co_op, who sponsored the event. They were joined by many other local councillors and a range of other representatives who wanted to recognise the contribution and achievements of local women.

As Mayor Taylor highlighted in his talk, "www doesn't just stand for the world wide web but also for the 'Wonderful Women of Watford'."

Michelle Dunn, reflected, "This was a wonderful event where we celebrated some of the great achievements of amazing women in our communities, whose stories were inspirational. One of the key messages from the evening was the importance of developing ambition and confidence in girls and young women so they can achieve their potential."

tedNEWS Staff: Victor Hulbert, editor

Some things take time



Woman of the Year Award 2019

It came as a surprise in October 2019 – Hannele Ottsofski was to be one of five women to be presented with the Woman of the Year Award of the General Conference Women's Ministries Department. Nobody expected her to fly to the Church Headquarters in Silver Spring so she was not able to attend the little ceremony prepared by the General Conference Department leaders Heather-Dawn Small and Raquel Arrais. The certificate was delivered to the Division President at Annual Council to be passed on, who gave it to Dagmar Dorn, the Women's Ministries

Director of the Inter-European Division.

Some things take time and there was no natural occasion for presenting the document. Dagmar did not just want to send the document by mail, so she invited Hannele and the other women she had worked with closely in the German-speaking areas of the Division to come to Zurich for a day on March 9, 2020. Now that they have all (except for Angelika Pfaller, who was not able to attend) retired from active service, there are not so many occasions for them to meet each other. Gerd-Laila Walter from Austria hopped on a night train and was the greatest surprise, as no-one had expected her to make the long trip just to be part of this little celebration. Together with Denise Hochstrasser and Heidi Albisser the five women spent a wonderful day, enjoying loving memories and real friendship. For all it was just like zooming back to the times when they would come together to present Leadership Certification Seminars in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. They expressed their conviction that although God used them to teach others, they had all personally learned more through this experience and grown as individuals. And finally, Dagmar was able to present the certificate to Hannele. With hearts full of joy and gratitude for the privilege they had of serving other women they all returned to their respective homes with a special glow.

Reflections on My Personal Women's Day



Equality remains the task of the century

The first Sabbath in March is the International Day of Prayer for Adventist Women in our church calendar. On this day, women around the world are called upon to lead the services. We did the same in Tübingen and prayed especially for concerns that are important for women around the world. Jasmin Stanoschefskey, head of the Women's Ministries department in the Baden-Württemberg Conference preached about how we as women can and should

make a difference in the world. In the afternoon, she organised a creative afternoon that met with interest.

The following day, March 8, was International Women's Day. Often these two days are not so close to each other. As a church, we do not usually pay special attention to Women's Day. It originated as an initiative of socialist organisations in the period before the First World War (1911) in the struggle for equal rights and suffrage for women. Since 1921 it has been celebrated annually on March 8. In 1975, the United Nations declared it United Nations Day for Women's Rights and World Peace. If women had more to say in the world, there would be more peace.

Jasmin had designed a beautiful card for us so that our women could pass this card on to other women. It was also distributed among the women in the refugee shelter in Tübingen. Therefore it was good that the text was both in English and German: "Be the woman you needed as a girl." We can be grateful for the women who made a positive impression on us when we were young, who made a difference in our lives. Especially young women and girls need guidance and mentoring. That is why it is important that we are there for them - on International Women's Day and every other day!

This year, despite the risk of the corona virus, I personally took International Women's Day very seriously. On Friday I followed the official ceremony at the United Nations via the Internet and was delighted that the Prime Minister of my home country, Sanna Marin, was invited to speak. www.youtube.com/watch

In the evening of March 7, I attended an event at which the film "Fighters for Peace" was shown. It is about the Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Denis Mukwege and the physician Dr. Schneider from Tübingen, who supports him in the Congo. In the panel discussion that followed, the journalist Susanne Babila, who made the film, talked to Dr. Schneider and Prof. Dr. Däubler-Gmelin. What can we do to stop rape as a weapon of war in the Congo? What do our mobile phones and the digitalised world have to do with it, and how can we intervene in solidarity for the Congolese women? The conversation made us think. You can see the film here: www.youtube.com/watch

On Sunday, on International Women's Day, a dialogue between the generations took place in the Herrenberg Town Hall. Prof. Uta Meier-Gräwe's topic was: "Equality remains the task of the century! Prof. Meier-Gräwe led the audience in her lecture from a fair division of labour between the sexes, to the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value and parity in parliaments. Afterwards, committed young women discussed with the speaker.

For the year 2020 UNWOMEN has chosen the slogan: Generation Equality. Within a century we have come a long way towards equality, but there is still a long way to go before we reach our goal. Hopefully it will not take another century! Unfortunately, things are no better in our church either. On the contrary. When we see the development of women's opportunities within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we must admit that it is declining. We are still a long way from equality - and yet it should not be thus. In fact, our church should be a leader in the equal treatment of women and men. It would be so easy to implement equal treatment if the desire were there.

As an addendum to Women's Day, on Monday I was able to learn about the life story of Greti Caprez-Roffler in Switzerland, who was the first woman to work as a pastor in the Reformed Church in Switzerland starting in 1931. In spite of all opposition, she was a strong and militant woman who, despite the family burden of being a mother of six children, always remained true to her vocation to serve as a pastor. She was ordained in 1963 after 30 years of work with eleven other female theologians. She considered this recognition of her life's work as a blessing from God.

www.youtube.com/watch

In her sermon on Sabbath, Jasmin spoke about three women who made a difference in the world: Mother Teresa, Kathrine Switzer, who was the first woman to run a long-distance race, and Rosa Parks, the mother of the civil rights movement. So my Women's Day comes full circle: There are many women who have made a difference and changed the world and still do so. In my book "Mit am Tisch: Frauen in der Freikirche der Siebent-tags-Adventisten" ("Together at the table," available through amazon) I have included a list of many women of our church who used their gifts and their strength for the work of God. You and I - we can do that too!

Hannele Ottschofski

World Church Executive Committee Votes to Postpone General Conference Session



Rescaled event to take place May 2021

The Executive Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (EXCOM) [voted](#) March 19, to postpone the 2020 General Conference Session until May 2021. The vote comes after a March 17 recommendation from the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM) to delay the 2020 General Conference Session (GC Session) by up to two years due to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 General Conference Session will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, and is currently scheduled from May 20 through May 25. It was originally scheduled from June 25 through July 4, 2020.

The Impact of COVID-19

The novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, has spread globally since the end of 2019. On January 30, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus a global health emergency and on March 11, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. As of now, the virus has infected more than 230,000 people. There have been more than 9,300 associated deaths.

“The Church has consulted with senior representatives of the World Health Organization structure and we are recommending that the Church take a careful approach to large gatherings including the General Conference Session,” said Adventist world Church Health Ministries director Peter Landless. “We also recommend that each region adhere to the proclamations of their local health organizations to find ways to maintain local church operations and mission through alternative means.”

Meeting from around the world via teleconferencing technology, the Executive Committee considered two recommendations that emerged from a series of official conversations and meetings at Adventist world Church headquarters. General Conference Session planners, health professionals, legal advisors and administrators explored possible alternative plans for the 2020 General Conference Session in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The General Conference Crisis Management Committee considered the possible alternative plans and made two recommendations to the ADCOM, including postponing the 2020 General Conference Session.

“After taking into account both the rapid spread of COVID-19 around the world and the uncertain nature of how it will develop over the next few months, the Crisis Management Committee considered postponement the safest and most prudent route to take,” said Geoffrey Mbwana, chair of the Crisis Management Committee and the Session Planning Committee.

By: Adventist Review & Adventist News Network

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