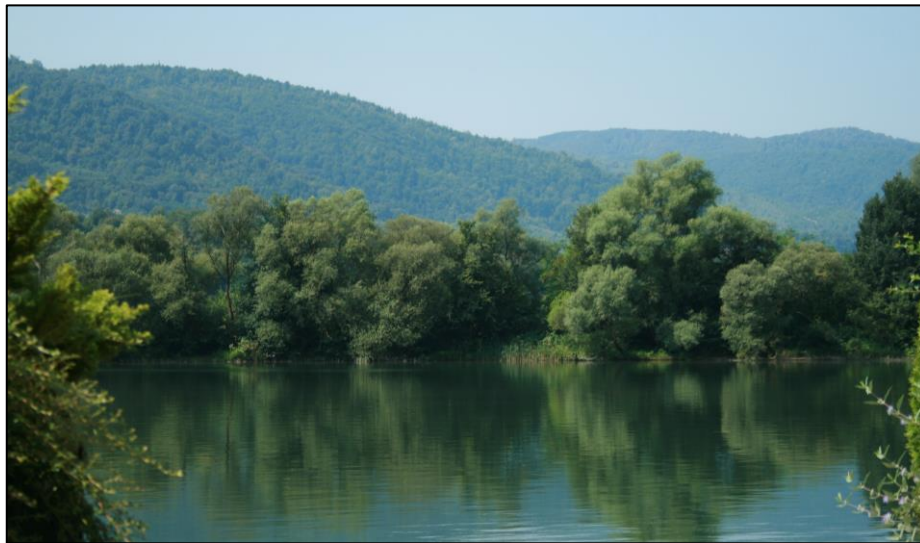




# EFECW News

September 2020



Thank You and glory to You, good God, for imprinting the seal of love in our hearts!

Thank You and glory to You, merciful God, for raising us after all our downfalls!

Thank You and glory to You, mighty God, for showing us where we are needed  
and where our little can do a lot.

Show us what it is that causes anxiety, restlessness and fear in us.

Teach us to walk patiently and peacefully, with our eyes fixed on You, through every day;  
and in joy or in suffering, to preserve the peace of heart and mind.

God, this is a new day and a new time

Help us to unite in the communion of love what is separated in us and around us.

We need your help, God.

Free us from the old person and prepare a place for a new being that You awaken in us;

Bless us and clean our hearts every day, God, so that we can feel Your love;

And then when fear and sorrow overwhelm us, pour out your consolation;

Guide us in prayer and open our hearts so that we can hear Your words and needs of our neighbours.

Eternal God, open our eyes to see the transience of this world;

Give us strength and confidence to turn to eternity!

Give us serenity with which we will glorify Your light and carry it joyfully to the world!

May it be the path of our hope that leads us to the heaven of our souls.

Amen!

*Marijana Ajzenkol, EFECW Co-President*

## EFEWCW National Coordinators' meeting online

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 18:00-20:00 (CET-Brussels, Warsaw, Zagreb)**

**"...for wherever you go I shall go, and wherever you live, I shall live..." Ruth 1:16**

As we often sing during our meetings "Sister carry on", we will carry on by adapting to social distancing while the world is still fighting with Covid19 pandemic, and finding other ways to meet and interact: Our first online-Zoom NC meeting will be organized on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Detailed instructions will be sent to all National Coordinators including information about the meeting; how to use Zoom (web version or downloaded application); and password to connect to the meeting.

All National Coordinators will receive a link and password to the Zoom NC meeting

If you wish other members of your group/organisation (up to 2 per organisation) to participate you will need to send their full name and emails to [info@efecw.net](mailto:info@efecw.net) by **25<sup>th</sup> September 2020**



Agenda:

1. A moment of prayer together
2. An opportunity to share with one another the situations in our countries
3. An update from the CC and Co-Presidents
4. To explore options for future events and meetings

## Gender, Faith and COVID-19

## Side by Side: Faith Movement for Gender Justice

The COVID-19 virus is a challenge to us all. As faith leaders and people of faith, who are rooted and trusted in communities, we are called to respond to this global pandemic. We are in unique positions that can enable transformation in our homes, communities, nations and globally. We have the power to be change makers:

- By communicating World Health Organisation guidance on physical distancing and preventative measures, by following that advice ourselves and teaching and encouraging our communities to do the same.
- By adapting our worship and developing and facilitating new, safe, practices of fellowship.
- By ensuring our responses, including the theologies that we promote, are based on our values of love, dignity and justice.



Side by Side, as a faith movement for gender justice, our network is expansive, multi-disciplinary, interfaith and inter-generational. We reach deep into our communities. This affords us a significant opportunity to curate, create and share information and other resources in order to encourage safe attitudes and behaviours.

We are particularly concerned by the gendered implications of Covid-19. In times of crisis, existing inequalities are often exacerbated and gender injustice remains. Women and girls are so often the primary carers and therefore especially vulnerable to infection. As people are asked to stay at home, we must recognise and address that the home is not a safe place for everyone. We know that incidences of sexual and gender-based violence are already increasing as a result of the pandemic. As faith leaders and people of faith we can and must stand firmly for love, dignity and justice, by:

- Speaking out in our communities and using all available media against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- Informing ourselves and our communities about available support for SGBV survivors and equipping ourselves and our communities to respond effectively

- Listening to, advocating for and championing the human rights of all those marginalised in the Covid-19 response.

Over the last few months, Side by Side has continued to bring faith actors (via digital platforms) to enable conversation and collaboration. We have hosted a series of shared conversations focusing on faith responses, gender, theology and advocacy. At a time of physical separation, members have also worked in creative ways. You can listen to the conversations and explore our resources via our webpage: [www.sidebysidegender.org/gender-faith-and-covid-19-resources](http://www.sidebysidegender.org/gender-faith-and-covid-19-resources)

In West Africa, our movement is working with the All Africa Conference of Churches and World Vision, to strengthen the capacity of faith actors to advocate for gender justice at this time.



The Global Side by Side Steering Group drafted the following prayer, acknowledging our shared purpose and solidarity:

We are bound together, our futures intertwined.

When the path is uncertain, help us to discern our next steps.

During this crisis, use our collective strength to bring hope.

Where there is darkness and pain, may we find ways to be the light.

Thank you for calling us all to be change makers, and channels of your love.

*Rachel Tavernor, Global Coordinator of Side by Side*

## 2020 Season of Creation (1<sup>st</sup> September – 4<sup>th</sup> October)

Joint statement from CEC-CCEE presidents



**World Council  
of Churches**



From 1 September to 4 October, Christians all over the world celebrate the Season of Creation, as well as the Day of Creation on 1 September. Following the tradition from previous years, in CEC and CCEE, we have taken advantage of this occasion and have encouraged our Member Churches in Europe to acknowledge these days to celebrate the richness of our faith as an expression to protect our common home.

The values of Season of Creation go back to the roots of the Christian faith. Creation is a gift of God for mankind and for all living beings. It is therefore our responsibility to protect it as good and reliable stewards, and as faithful servants of God. “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it,” (Psalm 24:1).

Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato Si’* underlined that “the urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development.” At the same time, he strongly appealed “for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.”

Similarly, one of the significant theologians of our era Jurgen Moltmann has made it clear that “today the theological adversary is the nihilism practiced in our dealings with nature” and called for “a discernment of the God, who is present in creation through his Holy Spirit,” a discernment that “can bring men and women to reconciliation and peace with nature.”

Celebrating the Day of Creation and the Season of Creation has a significant ecumenical dimension. While celebrating these days, we look back and give thanks for the proposal of the late Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I in 1989. Since that time, the idea of the Season of Creation and its ecumenical spirit has been further confirmed by the European Ecumenical Assemblies organised jointly by CEC and CCEE in Basel 1989, Graz 1997 and Sibiu 2007.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed how deeply the globe is interconnected. We realised more than ever that we are not isolated from each other and that conditions related to human health and well-being are fragile. Impact of the pandemic forces us to take seriously the need for vigilance and the need for conditions of sustainable life throughout the earth. This is even more important when considering the environmental devastation and the threat of climate change.



We invite you to celebrate the Season of Creation this year under the heading of Jubilee for the Earth. The concept of Jubilee is rooted in the Bible and underlines that there must exist a just and sustainable balance between social, economic and ecological realities. The lesson from the biblical concept of jubilee points us towards the need to restore balance in the very systems of life, affirming the need for equality, justice and sustainability and confirming the need for a prophetic voice in defence of our common home.

We invite all of the shepherds and European Christians, the parishes, church communities and every person of good will to pay attention to the Season of Creation and to live it with an ecumenical spirit, united in prayer and action.

*President of CEC*

*Rev. Christian Krieger  
Bagnasco*

*President of CCEE*

*Cardinal Angelo*



*Photo credit: Anne Marie Schott I*

## World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (1<sup>st</sup> September 2020)

### Message of Pope Francis

*"You shall thus hallow the fiftieth year  
and you shall proclaim a release throughout the land  
to all its inhabitants.  
It shall be a jubilee for you."  
(Lev 25:10)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Each year, particularly since the publication of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* (*LS*, 24 May 2015), the first day of September is celebrated by the Christian family as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the beginning of the Season of Creation, which concludes on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi on the fourth of October. During this period, Christians worldwide renew their faith in the God of creation and join in prayer and work for the care of our common home.

I am very pleased that the theme chosen by the ecumenical family for the celebration of the 2020 Season of Creation is *Jubilee for the Earth*, precisely in this year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day. In the Holy Scriptures, a Jubilee is a sacred time to remember, return, rest, restore, and rejoice.

#### 1. A Time to Remember

We are invited to remember above all that creation's ultimate destiny is to enter into God's eternal Sabbath. This journey, however, takes place in time, spanning the seven-day rhythm of the week, the cycle of seven years, and the great Jubilee Year that comes at the end of the seven Sabbath years.

A Jubilee is indeed a time of grace to remember creation's original vocation to exist and flourish as a community of love. We exist only in relationships: with God the Creator, with our brothers and sisters as members of a common family, and with all of God's creatures within our common home. "Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth" (*LS*, 92)

A Jubilee, then, is a time of remembrance, in which we cherish the memory of our inter-relational existence. We need constantly to remember that "everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others" (*LS*, 70).

#### 2. A Time to Return

A Jubilee is a time to turn back in repentance. We have broken the bonds of our relationship with the Creator, with our fellow human beings, and with the rest of creation. We need to heal the damaged relationships that are essential to supporting us and the entire fabric of life.

A Jubilee is a time to return to God our loving Creator. We cannot live in harmony with creation if we are not at peace with the Creator who is the source and origin of all things. As Pope



Photo credit: Anne Marie Schott 2

Benedict observed, “the brutal consumption of creation begins where God is missing, where matter has become simply material for us, where we ourselves are the ultimate measure, where everything is simply our property” (Meeting with Priests, Deacons, and Seminarians of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone, 6 August 2008).

The Jubilee season calls us to think once again of our fellow human beings, especially the poor and the most vulnerable. We are asked to re-appropriate God’s original and loving plan of creation as a common heritage, a banquet which all of our brothers and sisters share in a spirit of conviviality, not in competitive scramble but in joyful fellowship, supporting and protecting one another. A Jubilee is a time for setting free the oppressed and all those shackled in the fetters of various forms of modern slavery, including trafficking in persons and child labour.

We also need once more to listen to the land itself, which Scripture calls *adamah*, the soil from which man, *Adam*, was made. Today we hear the voice of creation admonishing us to return to our rightful place in the natural created order – to remember that we are part of this interconnected web of life, not its masters. The disintegration of biodiversity, spiralling climate disasters, and unjust impact of the current pandemic on the poor and vulnerable: all these are a wakeup call in the face of our rampant greed and consumption.

Particularly during this Season of Creation, may we be attentive to the rhythms of this created world. For the world was made to communicate the glory of God, to help us to discover in its beauty the Lord of all, and to return to him (cf. SAINT BONAVENTURE, *In II Sent.*, I, 2, 2, q. 1, conclusion; *Breviloquium*, II, 5.11). The earth from which we were made is thus a place of prayer and meditation. “Let us awaken our God-given aesthetic and contemplative sense” (*Querida Amazonia*, 56). The capacity to wonder and to contemplate is something that we can learn especially from our indigenous brothers and sisters, who live in harmony with the land and its multiple forms of life.

### 3. A Time to Rest

In his wisdom, God set aside the Sabbath so that the land and its inhabitants could rest and be renewed. These days, however, our way of life is pushing the planet beyond its limits. Our constant demand for growth and an endless cycle of production and consumption are exhausting the natural world. Forests are leached, topsoil erodes, fields fail, deserts advance, seas acidify and storms intensify. Creation is groaning!



During the Jubilee, God's people were invited to rest from their usual labour and to let the land heal and the earth repair itself, as individuals consumed less than usual. Today we need to find just and sustainable ways of living that can give the Earth the rest it requires, ways that satisfy everyone with a sufficiency, without destroying the ecosystems that sustain us.

In some ways, the current pandemic has led us to rediscover simpler and sustainable lifestyles. The crisis, in a sense, has given us a chance to develop new ways of living. Already we can see how the earth can recover if we allow it to rest: the air becomes cleaner, the waters clearer, and animals have returned to many places from where they had previously disappeared. The pandemic has brought us to a crossroads. We must use this decisive moment to end our superfluous and destructive goals and activities, and to cultivate values, connections and activities that are life-giving. We must examine our habits of energy usage, consumption, transportation, and diet. We must eliminate the superfluous and destructive aspects of our economies, and nurture life-giving ways to trade, produce, and transport goods.

#### *4. A Time to Restore*

A Jubilee is a time to restore the original harmony of creation and to heal strained human relationships.

It invites us to re-establish equitable societal relationships, restoring their freedom and goods to all and forgiving one another's debts. We should not forget the historic exploitation of the global South that has created an enormous ecological debt, due mainly to resource plundering and excessive use of common environmental space for waste disposal. It is a time for restorative justice. In this context, I repeat my call for the cancellation of the debt of the most vulnerable countries, in recognition of the severe impacts of the medical, social and economic crises they face as a result of Covid-19. We also need to ensure that the recovery packages being developed and deployed at global, regional and national levels must be regeneration packages. Policy, legislation and investment must be focused on the common good and guarantee that global social and environmental goals are met.

We also need to restore the land. Climate restoration is of utmost importance, since we are in the midst of a climate emergency. We are running out of time, as our children and young people have reminded us. We need to do everything in our capacity to limit global average temperature rise under the threshold of 1.5°C enshrined in the Paris Climate Agreement, for going beyond that will prove catastrophic, especially for poor communities around the world. We need to stand up for intra-generational and inter-generational solidarity at this critical moment. I invite all nations to adopt more ambitious national targets to reduce emissions, in preparation for the important Climate Summit (COP 26) in Glasgow in the United Kingdom.

Biodiversity restoration is also crucially important in the context of unprecedented loss of species and degradation of ecosystems. We need to support the U.N. call to safeguard 30% of the earth as protected habitats by 2030 in order to stem the alarming rate of biodiversity loss. I urge the international community to work together to guarantee that the Summit on Biodiversity (COP 15) in Kunming, China becomes a turning point in restoring the earth to be a home of life in abundance, as willed by the Creator.

We must restore with justice in mind, ensuring that those who have lived on the land for generations can regain control over its usage. Indigenous communities must be protected from companies, particularly multinational companies, that “operate in less developed countries in ways they could never do at home” (*LS*, 51), through the destructive extraction of fossil fuels, minerals, timber and agro-industrial products. This corporate misconduct is a “new version of colonialism” (SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, 27 April 2001, cited in *Querida Amazonia*, 14), one that shamefully exploits poorer countries and communities desperately seeking economic development. We need to strengthen national and international legislation to regulate the activities of extractive companies and ensure access to justice for those affected.

### 5. A Time to Rejoice

In the biblical tradition, a Jubilee was a joyous occasion, inaugurated by a trumpet blast resounding throughout the land. We are aware that the cries of the earth and of the poor have become even louder and more painful in recent years. At the same time, we also witness how the Holy Spirit is inspiring individuals and communities around the world to come together to rebuild our common home and defend the most vulnerable in our midst. We see the gradual emergence of a great mobilization of people from below and from the peripheries who are generously working for the protection of the land and of the poor. We rejoice to see how young people and communities, particularly indigenous communities, are on the frontlines in responding to the ecological crisis. They are calling for a Jubilee for the earth and a new beginning, aware that “things can change” (*LS*, 13).

We also rejoice to see how the *Laudato Si'* Special Anniversary Year is inspiring many initiatives at local and global levels for the care of our common home and the poor. This year should lead to long-term action plans to practice integral ecology in our families, parishes and dioceses, religious orders, our schools and universities, our healthcare, business and agricultural institutions, and many others as well.

We rejoice too that faith communities are coming together to create a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. We are particularly happy that the Season of Creation is becoming a truly ecumenical initiative. Let us continue to grow in the awareness that we all live in a common home as members of a single family.

Let us all rejoice that our loving Creator sustains our humble efforts to care for the earth, which is also God’s home where his Word “became flesh and lived among us” (*Jn* 1:14) and which is constantly being renewed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

“Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth” (cf. *Ps* 104:30).



Photo credit: Anne Marie Schott 3

## "Brexit: perspectives for Europe"

EFECW Co-President, Fiona Buchanan, held an online speaking club in Lviv Polytechnic University (Ukraine)

In the framework of the Lviv Polytechnic National University's Erasmus+ project «EU competitiveness boosting: circular economy» 610641-EPP-1-2019-1-UA-EPPJMO-MODULE, the Co-President of EFECW and project coordinator of Christian Aid Scotland, Fiona Buchanan, held the on-line EuroSPEAKing club for students and teachers, organised at the end of the spring semester by the EFECW CC member and University's Associate Professor Natalia Horbal.

The discussion focused on the past, present and future of Europe in the context of Brexit and Ukraine's European perspectives.

Thank you very much Fiona Buchanan for an interesting and inspiring event!

*by Natalia Horbal, member of EFECW CC*

# EuroSPEAKing club with Fiona Buchanan (Edinburgh) "Brexit: perspectives for Europe"

В межах гранту ЄС Ж.Моне кафедри ЗМД  
НУ «Львівська політехніка»  
«EU competitiveness boosting: circular economy»



#EFECW-Scotland #EFECW-Ukraine #EU #Erasmus+ #JeanMonnet #LvivPolytechnic #CircleE

## Sisters share wisdom of life rooted in Christ for next week of prayer for unity

### WCC news

The newly available materials for next year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity draw on the experience of contemplative community life to guide us on a journey of prayer bearing fruits of reconciliation and solidarity. Tasked with preparing a draft for the 2021 edition, the Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland chose the theme "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit" (cf. Jn 15:5-9).

The whole community, some 50 sisters from different churches and countries, worked over the course of several months on the draft.



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an international Christian ecumenical observance kept annually around Pentecost in the Southern Hemisphere and between 18-25 January in the Northern Hemisphere.

Each year ecumenical partners in a different region are asked to prepare the materials, including chiefly an ecumenical opening prayer service and biblical reflections and prayers for the eight-days of the octave, employed by churches around the world.

From its inception in the 1930s, the Community of Grandchamp was painfully aware of the divisions between churches. In their efforts to draw closer to each other by drawing closer to God, the sisters were encouraged by their friendship with Abbé Paul Couturier, a pioneer of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

"For decades, the sisters of Grandchamp have accompanied the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement with their silent presence and daily prayers," says Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus, interim deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and director of its Faith and Order Commission. "I will never forget the Vespers they led at the chapel of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute when I was a student. We have now taken a step forward and asked them to lead us in prayer for unity as we advance preparations for the 2022 WCC assembly."

With roots going back over 100 years, the dedicated octave of prayers has been jointly commissioned and prepared since 1966, after the Second Vatican Council, by the Roman Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the WCC's Faith and Order Commission.

The materials for 2021 are already available in English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese.

Read also:

[www.oikoumene.org/week-of-prayer](http://www.oikoumene.org/week-of-prayer)

[International brochure for 2021](#)

[Praying for unity with the Sisters of Grandchamp in 2021](#) (feature article by Odair Pedroso Mateus)

Interview with Fr Manuel Barrios, Spain/Belgium/Croatia: ["Week of Prayer made me feel deeply the Lord's desire for our complete unity"](#)

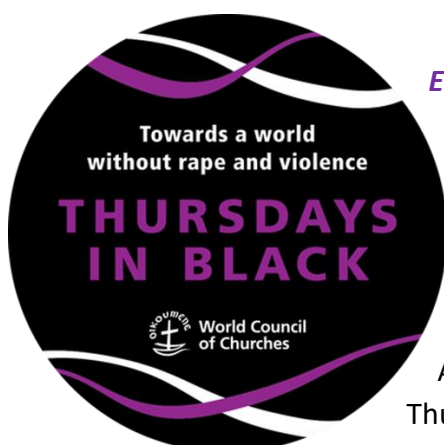
## News from the World Council of Churches

#Women #Ecumenical #UN #ThursdaysinBlack

*Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health,  
just as it is well with your soul. 3 John 1:2*

### Addressing Sexual and Gender based Violence- advocacy with our partners

Many of us have tried to make the most of the holiday season despite the travel restrictions and economic challenges upon us. Unfortunately, violence has not taken a vacation. In this the 25th anniversary since the Beijing Platform for Action and the 10th birthday of the establishment of UNWomen, domestic violence has increased significantly in spaces where physical distancing, travel restrictions and staying in place mechanisms have been enforced. Here at the WCC, we continue to collaborate with our ecumenical partners to provide training in Human Rights awareness, especially with regard to the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. This year our training will be framed a bit differently from our face to face meetings, but we and our partners are committed to ensure that every effort is made to provide this much-needed opportunity to hold our leaders accountable for the decisions made for us.



#### EW Thursdays in Black launch

Ecumenical Women at the UN (New York) has partnered with the WCC to promote the Thursdays in Black campaign. This Thursday, on August 20, as indicated in the message sent previously, the EW launch of Thursdays in Black begins with a Twitter storm.

Again, please find the links for joining the Ecumenical Women Thursdays in Black launch below:

- 1.) Just the [link](#) to the video **with no** EW introduction:
  - 2.) The [link](#) to video **with** EW introduction
  - 3.) The Ecumenical Women YouTube [link](#). You can share it via Ecumenical Women's Facebook page on Thursday, 20 August after 9am when it will go live. Feel free to join the launch; and please – we urge you to Pause, Pray, Pledge and Publish each Thursday as we raise awareness, lend support and solidarity to those impacted by femicide and violence, and share in resistance and resilience in this global campaign.
- **Pause** – to reflect on the plight of women, girls and vulnerable persons in your context and beyond
  - **Pray** – for their safety, especially in this season where many persons are trapped in place with their perpetrators, or remain stuck in cycles/systems of abuse
  - **Pledge** – with us, to make your own efforts to end sexual and gender-based violence



- **Post** – your Thursdays in Black selfies to social media; include a brief message stating why you joined the campaign and invite others to join us.

### Quilt Project

We continue to receive your artistic pieces for the Thursdays in Black Quilt project. The global exhibition is only as successful as your participation. Supporting is simple - prepare square cloth panels with images and messages that reflect your hope and commitment to overcome gender-based abuse and violence. Your panel should be



- in cloth, 30 cm x 30 cm (12in x 12in) with a 1cm/half inch border for joining panels together
- ideally black, purple or white

Visit [here](#) for more information.

### UN Women's 10th anniversary

Where were you in 2010 when UN Women was established? Have they made an impact in your country or in the lives of persons you know? For the 10th anniversary of UN Women, civil society is dedicating a chapter of an online book, Thank You, United Nations, to share your stories, poems, photos, and videos. These will be included in the chapter, "Women changed the UN - and the UN helped women change the world." Sign up and upload your content in any language. For questions or problems, please contact: [office@unwomenusa.org](mailto:office@unwomenusa.org). The site is open for submission through **30 August**. Please help to get the word out by sharing this announcement!

### Coping during Covid-19

For those who have been following WCC on social media and our updates, you may be aware that there is a response team committed to addressing concerns and celebrations of our member churches and partners during the pandemic. We have been sharing general information through our question and answer format as well as posts on specific topics such as SGBV. In short order, we hope to launch a series of podcasts led by people like you from all around the world. The WCC Covid-19 response page is located by using the following [link](#).

And finally, do you have a story of resilience and hope for overcoming adversity during the pandemic period? Your story could make the difference for someone else. Please share your reflections with us for inclusion in our JCWM updates and on our Covid-19 response page via email to [nas@wcc-coe.org](mailto:nas@wcc-coe.org).

And so my dears, I pray God's grace in all you do and that the flames of justice, God's justice will continue to burn for a safer and brighter tomorrow.

Together for Justice, and in Christ's love.

*Rev. Nicqi Ashwood, JCWM - World Council of Churches*

## “Beginning is one thing, and going on is something else”

### Women's spaces in Swiss Church and society from 1958 until today

A book presentation (coming out in September 2020)



The second Swiss Exhibition for Women's Work (SAFFA) in Zurich in 1958 was not simply "a pretty, colourful show with lots of cozy, feminine trappings". The Saffa 58 was also the founding site of the ecumenical women's movement in German-speaking Switzerland. The first part of this book deals with the intertwining of the church and secular women's movement and the theologians Ruth Epting, Else Kähler and Marga Bührig.

The "Saffa Church" was a women's space in which religious women discovered a new language for themselves. Marga Bührig and Else Kähler developed these experiences further at the Evangelical Conference Center Boldern, where they entered into

an exchange with younger women. The second part of the book is dedicated to the women's movement as a "women's tradition" and the inter-generational conversation as it is cultivated today in the Frauen\*Zentrum (Women\*sCenter in Zurich).

## “Aufbruch ist eins, und Weitergehen ist etwas anderes”

### Frauenräume von der Saffa 58 über das Tagungszentrum Boldern zum Frauen\*Zentrum Zürich

<https://www.efefverlag.ch/product/aufbruch-ist-eins-und-weitergehen-ist-etwas-anderes/>

Die zweite Schweizerische Ausstellung für Frauenarbeit (SAFFA) 1958 in Zürich war nicht einfach «eine hübsche, bunte Schau mit viel traulich-fraulichem Drum und Dran». Die Saffa 58 war auch der Gründungsort der ökumenischen Frauenbewegung in der Deutschschweiz. Von den Verflechtungen der kirchlichen und der säkularen Frauenbewegung und den Theologinnen Ruth Epting, Else Kähler und Marga Bührig handelt der erste Teil dieses Buches.

Das «Saffa-Kirchlein» war ein Frauenraum, in dem religiöse Frauen eine neue Formensprache für sich entdeckten. Diese Erfahrungen entwickelten Marga Bührig und Else Kähler am Evangelischen Tagungszentrum Boldern weiter, wo sie in den Austausch mit jüngeren Frauen traten. Der Frauenbewegung als einer «Tradition der Frauen» und dem intergenerationellen Gespräch, wie es heute im Frauen\*Zentrum gepflegt wird, ist der zweite Teil des Buches gewidmet.

Erscheint im September 2020.

*Evelyne Zinsstag and Dolores Zoé Bertschinger*

## Hope: uniting two generations

### A reflection from our sisters in Armenia



COVID – 19 invaded our lives and made us live with its own rules. And people like the ones who don't know how to swim, appeared in the open sea. They did everything not to be drowned.

Endless state of emergency and isolation... On these pandemic days, a new life began that is a remote life. Remote life was a kind of interesting and modern life for the younger generation but unfortunately we cannot say the same for the older generation. For them it was quite difficult and incomprehensible. New rules first of all targeted the older teachers who had to carry on their job on the online platform. In the beginning, the teachers were anxious and desperate as there was no need for them before to have computer skills and as for now they had to teach their children online with computers. Not having the skills of information technologies, the teachers had feelings of anger and disappointment as before there was no need for them to have these skills. Some teachers could not imagine how to organise their online lessons, or did not know what a zoom platform is,

or how to work with new equipment.

*«I think that permanent online studying would not be productive either for teachers or for children and their parents».* Anahit Sayadyan, a geography teacher at N13 school in Yerevan

To overcome these psychological problems of the older generation, the efforts of older generation were great. They helped them to gain new skills that were necessary to use the new technological equipment. The older generation was so inspired by the success they had, that they began to go deeper in their skills, to improve themselves and even took part in different kinds of online seminars in order to become more skillful. A new hope was born; they became more self-confident and energetic.

*«I was disappointed and didn't know how to arrange my lesson; a sense of inability covered me. But our young parents did their best. If not for their endless diligence I would not succeed».* Lucia Nersisyan, a history teacher at N 13 in Yerevan.

*«On March 16 it was decided that we should arrange our lessons on the online platform. I panicked; I was scared and disappointed. But with the help of my children's parents, I overcame all the difficulties and arranged my lessons with success».* Hasmik Maryanyan, N 13 school in Yerevan.

*«At first I was anxious and disappointed, there was uncertainty everywhere, but I was stimulated by my young parents who had skills of new technologies».* L. Margaryan, school in Jrashen village.

The cooperation between younger and older generations born a new strength to accept the challenges of life and make them to work in favor of scientific development, to make life better.

And it is the very moment to remember once again the great Armenian historian of 5th century Eghishe, who said: «Give me a smart and intelligent mother and I will give you a smart and intelligent society».

*Syuzanna Sargsyan, Pedagogue-Psychologist, Armenian Forum*

## EWL letter to the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen

### COVID-19 pandemic impact on women and girls and immediate responses needed from the European Commission

Dear President,

Through the ongoing input from our member organisations from across Europe, the EWL is very well placed to testify of the widespread effect of the COVID-19 crisis on women and girls. Women's organisations within EWL membership are reporting about the dire situations of **women and girls increasingly at risk of violence, poverty and threats to their economic independence**. Women made vulnerable and excluded in our society are particularly at risk of being even more pushed to the sidelines or at risk of serious harm if not given specific consideration in designing the response to and recovery from this unprecedented crisis.



Women form the large majority of health workers, food shop cashiers, service providers and care takers. We must recognise that the central role of women, and the precarious situation for so many, is due to **the disproportionate representation of women in the care sector, and how this sector has not only historically been undervalued, but particularly devalued further through austerity measures undertaken in recent years.**

It is in a moment such as the current pandemic when our eyes can only be further opened to the full impact of austerity measures, and we must turn the tide for the sake of our society and our future generations. This requires not only immediate responses in areas of **healthcare** (physical and mental health), **combatting violence against women and girls**, and ensuring **women's economic independence**, but also a longer-term transformational response. Together with our members, we are currently developing detailed recommendations on these areas which we will make sure to share very soon with Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli.

**Under your leadership, the European Commission must play its vital role in responding to the crisis: through acting not only as a linking point between Member States in this time of need but also providing a vision for the future of Europe that is more inclusive, equal and sustainable for all.**

This can be achieved urgently through ensuring in the upcoming negotiations that **Member States are fully enabled to invest in gender responsive public services**, by:

- loosening the criteria of the European Stability Pact, to enable Member States to invest in gender responsive public services and support the care sector;
- redirecting Cohesion Funds, within the current MFF, to ensure that mechanisms of solidarity between and amongst Member States;

- instructing Member States to apply a gender equality perspective in their spending priorities of European funds and any future stimulus and investment policies, in compliance with their obligations under Article 8 of the Lisbon Treaty.

Member States must also be urgently requested to declare as **“essential services” all the support services to women** as helplines and shelters for women victim of male violence, migrant women, homeless women and those affected by prostitution. The necessary funds must be allocated to ensure the full continuity of these services while protecting beneficiaries and workers from the spread of the virus. The Commission can also play a key role in sharing the best examples of Member State responses to this, whether regarding legal interventions, service provision or awareness raising.

In the mid-term, it can be achieved through the prioritisation and coordinated implementation of the **Gender Equality Strategy and a revised proposal for the next MFF (2021-2027)** to:

- ensure funding for concrete measures for implementation of gender mainstreaming (including gender budgeting) and a financial guarantee to support women’s organisations and services;
- to allocate European Commission funding and support to hold **national dialogues** and **coordinate the exchange of good practices transnationally, to include women’s organisations**;
- deliver on a **Care Deal for Europe** where women and men are equal earners-equal carers, have equal, flexible options to balance their work and care responsibilities across the life-cycle, and investing in a **care economy**.

The European Commission must deliver on promises towards ‘**equal work for equal value**’, particularly in underpaid sectors such as care, education and social services. To do so, it must call on the EU’s public bank, namely, the European Investment Bank to direct its annual budget to the care sector, in line with its Strategy on Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment.

In the medium and long term, we call on the Commission to ensure **gender mainstreaming** is at the centre of the development of all policies, particularly in the context of the response to the current pandemic, climate, digitalisation and migration and; continuing working for the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention, while delivering on a **Directive on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls** to align existing relevant EU legislation and strengthen measures to disrupt the full continuum of violence, aligned with the Istanbul Convention and including sexual exploitation, tackling both online and offline violence.

We would be happy to provide any further detail or support that would be of assistance and will be on hand for any specific queries. We are all standing in solidarity together through these moments of loss, and we will look forward to working with you to ensure this moment leads to a positive transformation towards a more equal, fair and feminist Europe for all.

Yours sincerely,

*Gwendoline Lefebvre, President, European Women’s Lobby*



## **“We Lift Our Voices for the Integrity and Well-being of God’s Creation!”**

### **Circle of Prayer, volume 25**

*Devotional thoughts and prayers to be used when participating in the Fellowship of the Least Coin*



### **Created in God’s Image - Genesis 1.26-27**

Reading the Bible from its beginning, I cannot stop thinking of our being created by our Triune God. It is an extraordinary fact that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, and I am really fascinated that humankind bears the image and likeness of God. Ontologically speaking, men and women belong to the unity of the Triune God, and that also means the same in the Church. St. Maximus the Confessor wrote that the universe is the Church herself, and the Church is the universe. The human crisis in my country with the refugees mainly from Syria, is the denial of a good number of European Countries to accept them as people of God - whether they be Christians or Muslims, Europeans or not, and having their own customs and traditions. “Being created according to the image of God” means that we - all living persons, not only the baptised ones - have the possibility to become gods by grace. “According to the likeness of God” means that we have all the advantages to reach our goal. With only one condition: our free will, in order that “creation itself will set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8. 21). There is a blaring, ultimate need to recognize the “other” as “me”; to open our eyes and to meet the original beauty which God created us with; to join our voices and our prayers for a united world, with our great differences and variations, mixtures and parallels. I pray for this!

#### **PRAYER**

*Dear Triune God, help us open our eyes so that we may see, when we discriminate and don’t see anything. Help us to see your glory and your holy face. Touch and open our hearts to see your face in all those in hunger, seeking refuge and on the run. The world has been created so well! Please God, help us see that and act for the wellbeing of the world. We pray and humbly ask you to help us see the beauty of the world and feel blessed and safe. Amen.*

*Dr. Vasiliki Mavroska, Associate Professor of Dogmatics at the Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens*

*Former EFECW co-President*

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*Please continue to support:*

The Fellowship of the Least Coin (<http://www.flc.net.ph>)

and the Ruth-Epting Fund ([www.efecw.net](http://www.efecw.net))

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