



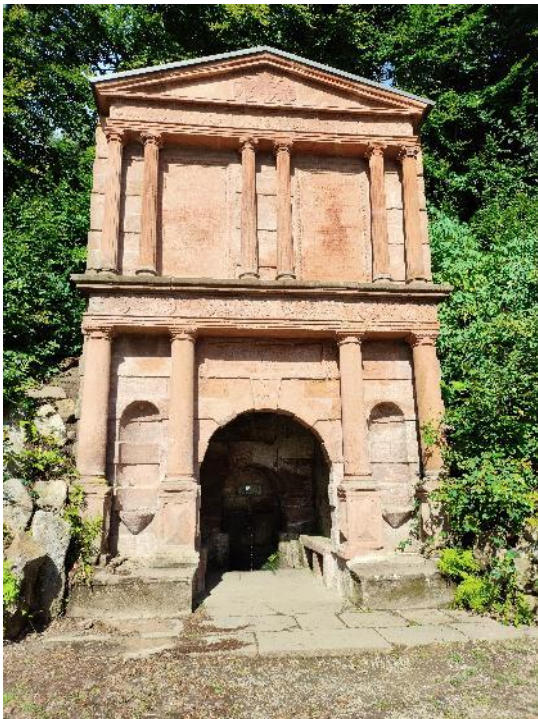
EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

NEWSLETTER

SPRING-SUMMER 2026

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (Amos 5:24)



At this time our continent and our world continue to face conflict, uncertainty and division. It can sometimes feel difficult to know how to respond. I believe this newsletter is a reminder that peace is not simply the absence of conflict. Peace is built through relationships, through listening, through our actions and our refusal to give up hope.

Across EFECW, women continue to work for peace, justice and reconciliation in many different ways: through dialogue, advocacy, creativity, prayer and fellowship. In this edition you will read about preparations for our General Assembly in Marburg, the growing GARDEN project, Open Space discussions, and the experiences of women seeking to make a difference in their churches and communities.

This newsletter also brings joyful news from within our own community. We warmly congratulate our Coordinating Committee member, Jelena, on the birth of her daughter, Mina. Jelena writes very movingly for us on pages 5-6. At a time when much of the world is marked by conflict and uncertainty, the arrival of a new life reminds us of hope, renewal and God's continuing presence among us.

May this newsletter encourage and inspire us as individuals, within our communities and as members of the Forum to respond to God's call to be builders of peace, justice and reconciliation in the world.

Anthea Sully, EFECW CC member

Photo: "Elisabeth Fountain in Marburg-Schröck", by EFECW



COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Coordinating Committee meeting

30 April – 1 May 2026, Marburg



The Coordinating Committee met in Marburg at the Begegnungszentrum, Haus Sonneck for a moment of reflection, discussion, and creation in preparation of the Extraordinary Assembly (21st May 2026) and the 12th General Assembly and Conference (8-13 September 2026).

We missed Judith, who had to resign for personal reasons, and Jelena who had recently undertaken a new demanding “role”, becoming a mother. Anthea was able to join us only online. The CC was accompanied by Irene and Snezana (GARDEN team), Hanne and Johanna (German Forum) and Maren, who for once more guided a walk on the path of the pilgrimage.

In the coming months, the CC will continue working on the details of the programme (see below) including new features and ensuring that participants will have a memorable event with a lot of reflection, sharing, spiritual moments to continue strengthening our sisterhood.

Time	Tue 8 Sept	Wed 9 Sept	Thu 10 Sept	Fri 11 Sept	Sat 12 Sept	Sun 13 Sept		
From 7 am	Breakfast							
9:00-9:30	Prayer							
9:30-11:00	Arrivals	Opening, Welcome, Introductions and Expectations	GARDEN: Gathering Around Religion, Dance, Energy, Nature.	Pilgrimage	New CC candidates' presentation and elections	Departures		
11:00-11:15		Break	Break		Break			
11:15-12:45		Building our safe space	GARDEN continued		Inauguration new CC			
13:00-14:00		Lunch						
14:00-15:30		Exploration of the theme Renewal: "Then their eyes were opened..."	Who is a Woman* today?	Pilgrimage	Renewed Vision of EFECW + Message			
15:30-15:45		Break	Break		Break			
15:45-17:00		Presentation of candidates	Who is a Woman* today? Continued	Free time in town	Evaluation			
17:00-17:30	Reflection groups							
18:00-19:00	Dinner							
19:30-21:00	Opening Ceremony	JSL publication and celebration	Open Space – National Forums	Free evening	Closing ceremony			

Photo – Text: EFECW



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

Extraordinary General Assembly

Online, 21st May 2026

The Coordinating Committee called for an Extraordinary General Assembly online following the decision of the XIth GA (Strasbourg, 2022) to handle duties/responsibilities of the EFECW General Assembly virtually, ensuring more time for in-person collaboration and profound encounter during the physical meetings of the GA, and in this case the coming GA in September 2026, in Marburg.



Twelve countries were represented at the meeting, first receiving and approving a four-year report of activities: meetings (online and physical) of the Coordinating Committee, online meetings of the National Coordinators, the GARDEN project, young women's Open Space discussions online, social media, podcast, newsletter,

and representation-cooperation with other organisations (ICFLC, CEC, WCC, EYCE, CINGO Council of Europe, Church and Peace, EPIL, ESWTR).

Following the report of activities, the treasurer presented the financial report and a recommendation to establish a minimum annual membership fee for ordinary and individual members based on trends of the last four years.

The last part of the Extraordinary General Assembly consisted of voting and adopting a series of changes of the constitution and bylaws, to ensure a new category of membership: the individual members for countries where there is no National Forum, granting equal rights and obligations.



Photo & Text: EFECW



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

GARDEN: Gathering Around, Religion, Dance, Energy, Nature

Promoting care for the environment and climate justice



GARDEN follows the commitment made in the General Assembly message of 2022: “to speaking out with Hope and Responsibility in the world ... for the care of the environment and the promotion of climate justice.”

The aim is to bring together women from across EFECW to explore a shared response to the climate crisis. The project is being led by Marijana Ajzenkol from Serbia and Anthea Sully from England. They have recently been joined by Arine Benschop from the Netherlands who is developing the theological underpinning of GARDEN and who will be opening the session dedicated to this theme at Marburg by sharing a theological reflection from which the rest of the morning will emerge. This special session will use theatre, movement, and creative reflection, with workshops that will

include music, art and practical ways to work for climate justice.

We are very pleased to announce that the website for the online journey/pilgrimage is now live! Anyone interested in the forum, wherever they are, is able to join an online journey through the nations of the forum. From 25 July a new blog post will be published each day sharing prayer, stories and actions from a different country. The route is possible to travel by land or sea and apart from one place it never crosses over itself. If you subscribe each day's journey will be sent to you as an email for the 45 days of the journey. Find out more here <https://christianwomengarden.wordpress.com/> please sign up now and share with your friends!

Anthea Sully, EFECW CC member



The Day I Became Mina's Mother

There are dates that quietly pass through our lives, and there are dates that divide life into a before and an after.

For me, that date is March 5th (2026).

On a late winter day in Serbia, my daughter Mina was born, and with her, a new version of myself came into existence. While everyone around me was welcoming a newborn child into the world, the world was also welcoming a newborn mother.

Nothing prepared me for the depth of that moment.

As I held her for the first time, I thought of the beloved Serbian poet Desanka Maksimović, who wrote: "Happiness is beautiful only while it is awaited." Yet, as I looked into Mina's eyes, I felt that some happiness does not fade when it arrives. Some happiness begins there.

Since that day, time has changed its rhythm.

I no longer measure life by deadlines, accomplishments, or seasons. I measure it in smiles, tiny discoveries, peaceful naps, and the comforting weight of a sleeping baby resting on my chest. Days seem shorter and fuller at the same time. The ordinary has become extraordinary.



Motherhood has taught me that love is not a feeling that remains still. It expands. Every morning I wake up convinced that I could not possibly love my daughter more than I did the day before, and every evening I discover that I was mistaken.

There are sleepless nights and moments of uncertainty. There are days when exhaustion settles quietly beside me. But there is also a joy so profound that it transforms everything it touches. A smile. A gaze. A tiny hand wrapped around my finger. Small miracles repeated daily.

The Persian poet Rumi wrote, "Through love, all that is bitter will be sweet." I understand those words differently now. Motherhood has not removed life's challenges, but it has illuminated them with a deeper meaning. Love has become the lens through which I see everything.

As a poet, I have spent years searching for words. I believed poetry lived in books, in silence, in long contemplative walks, or in moments of inspiration. Then Mina arrived and taught me that poetry can also live in the soft breathing of a sleeping child, in a midnight feeding, in a smile that appears without warning and fills an entire room with light.



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

My daughter reminds me to look more closely at the world. Through her eyes, everything feels new again: sunlight dancing across a wall, the song of birds in the morning, the miracle hidden within ordinary days.



Before Mina, I thought motherhood was something a woman learns. Now I know it is something a woman becomes.

And so, every day since March 5th, we have been growing together. She is discovering the world for the first time, while I am discovering myself anew.

As Rumi also wrote, "Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of what you really love." Motherhood has become that quiet force in my life, a force that has reshaped my priorities, softened my heart, and revealed depths of gratitude I never knew existed.

And there is something else motherhood has revealed to me.

Mina did not simply enter our lives; she became the thread that weaves them together more tightly than ever before. She is the gentle center around which our days now turn, the quiet light that fills our home with warmth and purpose.

For my husband and me, she has become far more than a daughter. She is a shared dream made real, a daily reminder of what truly matters, and a living expression of the love that created her. Through her, our family has found a new dimension, a deeper bond, and a renewed sense of meaning.

In her laughter, we find joy. In her growth, we find hope. And in the future that lies before her, we discover our greatest purpose.

A little girl named Mina was born in Serbia on March 5th.

On that same day, I was born into motherhood.

And ever since, my heart has been living outside of me.

That is the most beautiful poem I have ever known.

Jelena G. Mladenović, EFECW CC member

"Сањај велике снове" (Translation: May you always dream big)



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL EFECW

EFECW England Gathering

“Building Peace in a World of Despair”, Malvern

On 28th February 2026, the England Forum held its first in-person meeting since before COVID. The meeting was also hybrid, and several women were able to join online, including keynote speaker **Marijana Ajzenkol**, Co-President of EFECW and a member of the Serbian Forum. This was an open meeting and we were also able to welcome several women from outside the forum.

The theme, *Building Peace in a World of Despair*, took on unexpected urgency following the overnight US attack on Iran, which cast a shadow of shock and concern over the gathering. Anthea and Dorothy brought opening reflections from Philippians 4, as a response to the political situation. They reminded everyone of the important role of women in the early Church, the need for solidarity, and the call to bring prayers for peace before God.



Marijana spoke powerfully about hope amid conflict, drawing on the continuing student-led protests in Serbia following the Novi Sad railway station disaster. She described a movement calling for accountability, transparency and democratic reform, supported by educators, artists, farmers and health workers. Her message emphasised that peace is more than the absence of conflict: it requires reconciliation, respect and the courage to pursue justice. In a world marked by war and uncertainty, hope remains an active choice and a source of strength.



“Ukrainian child”, by Margret Hallmark

The afternoon included presentations from Quakers **Melanie Jameson**, who shared campaigning work against arms fairs, and **Liz Flanagan**, who showcased creative peace education projects in schools. Artist **Margaret Hallmark** displayed paintings inspired by her work with children affected by conflict, including recent responses to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

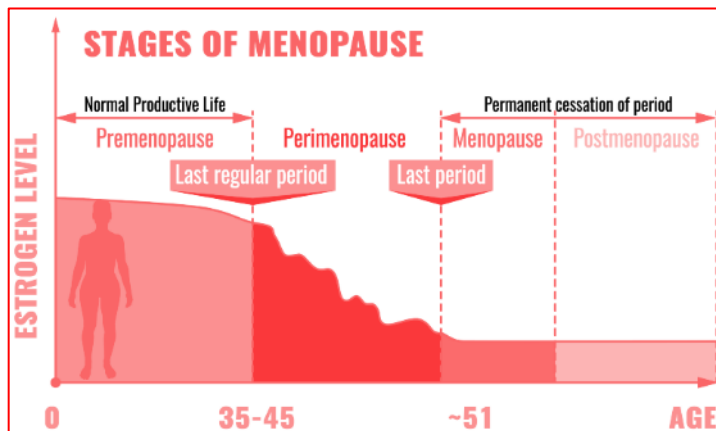
We learned to fold peace cranes and doves which became a focus for the closing vigil. We remembered communities affected by conflict across the world, and spoke the powerful words of the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation. The gathering concluded with prayers for courage, compassion and nonviolence, and a renewed commitment to be witnesses of hope and peace in a troubled world.

Photo & Text: EFECW England

OPEN SPACE DISCUSSIONS**“Menopause”****8th February 2026**

30 sessions Open Space! For this jubilee we tackled the topic menopause. Why do young women talk about it? Well, menopause just starts to receive the attention it deserves in medical research and slowly also in our societies. Everyone encounters women going through menopause, even if we do not notice, and as young women, one day we'll for sure experience it ourselves.

To start off, we learned about more precise vocabulary. The turbulent time we usually call menopause starts with the last (more or less) regular menstruation and ends with the very last menstruation. Medically, it is called perimenopause and can last up to eight years. Menopause is rather the time after menstruation (meno-) has ceased completely (-pause) and is often less symptom-filled.



What can make the perimenopause a turbulent time are dozens of symptoms caused by dramatic changes in the level of the hormone Estrogen. During perimenopause, its level sinks severely influencing the whole body, especially the brain. Hormones play a crucial role in the body's internal communication system. Estrogen influences the activity of neurons and

brain cells. With its drop, the brain loses in activity. But don't worry: even with approximately 30 % less brain activity after perimenopause, women do not lose intelligence or cognitive abilities – our brains still rock it! Until they got used to their new dosage of estrogen, brain units in charge of regulation of body temperature or memory can have difficulties to execute their functions as we are used to – light forgetfulness and hot flushes are caused this way but cease over time. There is much more extremely fascinating to learn about estrogen, menopause and brain health and a lot more research to be done. Let's hope that we will soon hear more about this important and interesting time in life!

Next to all this neuroscience, we spoke a lot on the invisibility of women going through perimenopause in our societies. If we came in contact with the topic, it was few courageous women talking openly about what they were going through. Still, silence about integral experiences of women in all parts of society and the stigma of the “incapable women” are influencing our lives – and only knowledge about it and the courage to speak up and listen to those who do so can help us overcome this. Maybe, we asked ourselves, in such a society mothers in perimenopause and daughters in puberty get along better and maybe marriages do not get



divorced most often in the age groups affected most by perimenopause? What are your thoughts on these questions – and how do you speak about stigmatized women’s experiences like menopause (or menstruation or postpartum or ...)? If you do or if you don’t, have the courage to believe in yourself – no matter how troublesome your perimenopause might get. Care about yourself, check out symptom lists and find a supportive doctor, look out for menopause cafes or other supportive people in your surroundings. And if a woman around us speaks up, let’s have her back!

Hannah Kehrein

Photos: (1) [Three Phases of Menopause](#) (2) Screenshot of PPT slide prepared by Hannah Wehner

“Spiritual Abuse”

22nd March 2026

When we met in March, we spoke about Spiritual Abuse. A first way to approach the topic is to ask oneself in which spiritual contexts and situations one has felt alright, safe and comfortable – and which one did not. Why was it this way? For our group, a common factor was how our own thoughts, feelings and expression of them was received: with respect or with shaming or blaming. Freedom of thought, belief and speech in spiritual or religious contexts is for us a precious good and a necessity to find a safe spiritual home where we can grow.

So, what is spiritual abuse? “When faith is used to control, shame, or silence.” Or, put the other way around, “any abuse (psychological, emotional, verbal, financial, physical, and/or sexual control) using the assumed authority of God to lend the abuser legitimacy and disempower their victims.” Mostly, spiritual abuse is done in 1-on-1 relationships, typically involving power imbalance (e.g. a church social worker towards youth, a priest/pastor towards parishioners, etc.) It can include gaslighting, the use of fear or ‘divine calling’ to control or God’s name and will to



coerce, telling one that the suffering one experiences would be some sort of redemptive martyrdom, among others.

Additionally, spiritual abuse can be understood as part of religious trauma. Religious trauma is broader, including all aspects of a religion or religious culture affecting one negatively over time. Religious trauma can have many facets, and spiritual abuse can be one of them. Others are authoritarian teaching, ostracism for non-conformity, traumatizing rituals, isolation and alienation among others.

We all can find ourselves in spiritual abuse, in different roles. “Spiritual abuse can happen in any religion, denomination or leadership style.” To break circles of manipulation, judgment, exploitation, condemnation, deception and martyrdom works best if we speak about our experiences, and listen to those telling us their stories, believe and accompany them. We can regularly check on ourselves and people within our religious community. Are we feeling safe and cherished? Is my voice heard and my faith cherished? Can one exit the community freely without consequences? Do I experience fear? Are others around me okay or maybe expressing signs of unwellness? To which sort of atmosphere in my religious community am I contributing? If we find ourselves in difficult situations, there is help available outside religious communities that is professional and sensitive to faith.



In all our journey through life with different religious communities, we can take refuge to God who is love (cf. 1 John 4:16) and in whose house are many rooms (cf. John 14:2) – also rooms and space to freely express our own thoughts, feelings and experiences, just as we stated at the beginning.

By Hannah Kehrein

Photo credit: https://miro.medium.com/1*Phli482m8pHhhXMG-lruCg.png

“Anger, Aggression and Depression”

19th April 2026

Our Open Space in April connected three very meaningful topics into a discussion, creating an environment in which we could share our stories once more. The icebreaker we used was „Can you remember a moment in which you felt angry?“ and it made us share our genuine feelings on the topic.

We began to look at anger not as something isolated, but as a secondary emotion, something that often grows out of fear, stress, injustice, or feeling threatened, whether physically or emotionally.

Anger


- Secondary emotion for underlying:
 - Fear / anxiety
 - Stress
 - Injustice
 - Threat (physical or emotional)



Understanding and managing anger
<https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/issues/anger/>

ANGER IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG: WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

Use the anger iceberg to help you understand the emotions under your anger.



What others see
ANGER
Yelling, sarcasm, irritability, passive-aggression, outbursts, isolation

Shielding feelings
Frustration, resentment, annoyance, bitterness, dismissal

Pain beneath the surface
Hurt, sadness, grief, shame, embarrassment

What we rarely express
Fear, anxiety, helplessness, loneliness, powerlessness

Root Needs Driving It All
I need to feel safe
I need to be understood
I need respect
I need connection
I need control

What's really going on

ChoosingTherapy.com

Many of us are carrying anger connected to the current political situations in our different countries, for example the ongoing student movement in Serbia. Our common anger was also directed at the enduring influence of patriarchal structures.

Hannah introduced us to the PERMA model, which reminded us, that well-being isn't just the absence of difficult emotions, but something we can actively build:

- Positive Emotions: allowing ourselves to feel joy, gratitude or even small moments of lightness
- Engagement: being fully present in what we do, losing ourselves in moments that matter
- Relationships: leaning on each other, feeling seen and supported
- Meaning: connecting to something bigger than ourselves
- Accomplishment: goals and progress, even in small steps

Ultimately, the Open Space was not only about acknowledging difficult emotions, but about how we choose to channel anger as energy and transform it into something that connects us, grounds us, and helps us move forward in a more balanced way, so that heavier feelings, like depression, don't quietly take hold.



Agnes Kiegenesberger

Photo credit: Screenshots of PPT slides created by Hannah Wehner

“Grief”

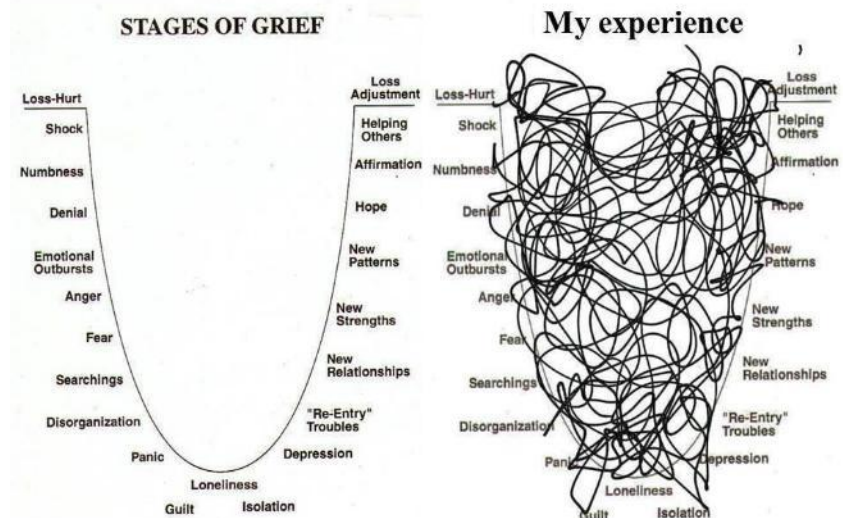
31st May 2026

While the first summerly heat wave made its way through our continent, in our Open Space meeting we spoke about grief and grieving. You might wonder why we chose to address this topic which is commonly perceived as difficult and sad? Well, because of this very first reaction we might have!

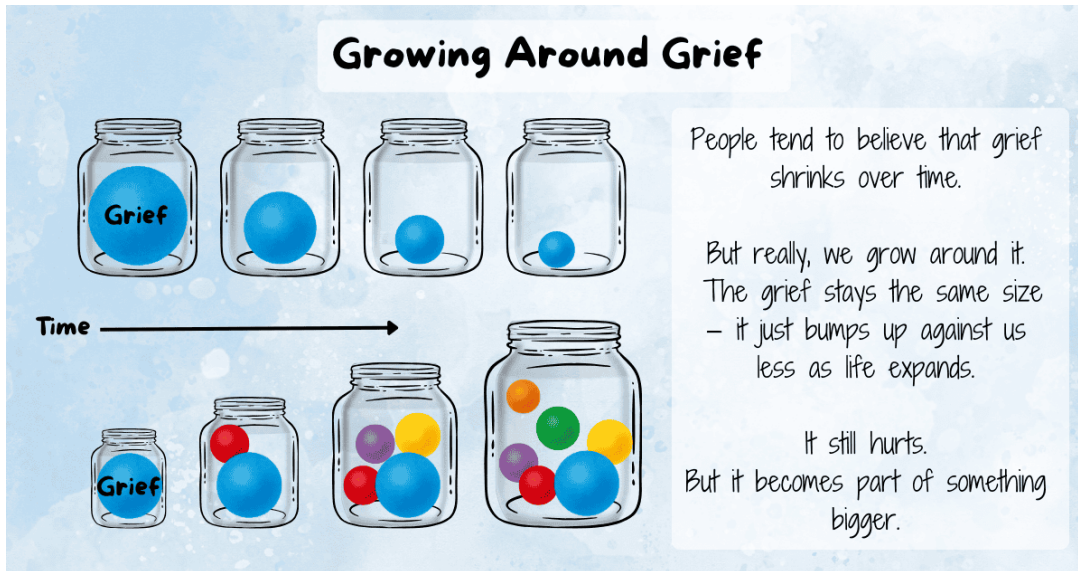
All of us human beings go through losses of very different kinds, react with grief, the natural response to loss, a was collection of emotions. Yet, grieving, the process of coming to terms with loss, living through our emotions and reflecting them is an extremely personal and individual experience. While there are

many theories that try to systematize grieving the lived experience is often a lot messier. Theories can help us reflect for ourselves or supporting others. They can show that what we are going through is part of the huge “normal” that exists in grieving.

Very insightful was for us the picture that over time not the grief was shrinking – but live is expanding around the grief giving new room to new experiences. Like trees we keep on growing



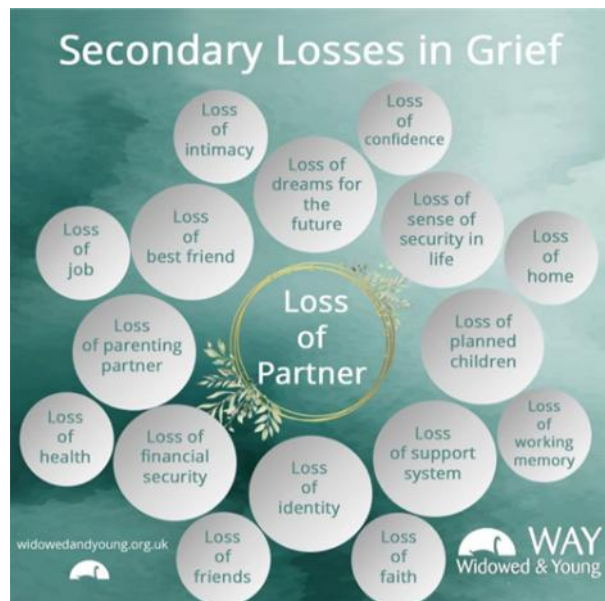
incorporating joy and grief yet continuously growing (you might have seen a tree growing around a broken of branch or even a piece of fence or a street sign).



Also, how many secondary losses can come with a single loss struck us and brought to mind that loss is a lot more than the death of loved ones and often demands for letting go of dreams and possibilities and creating a renewed self-understanding.

As always, no one needs to face hardships alone. Be it light or heavy grief or feelings that we don't think we dealt "correctly" with a loss (for example when grief comes very delayed or not at all). For all there are options for counselling and finding people to speak to about what we might be going through. Bereavement support can look differently: personal counselling in person, on the phone or online, walking groups, open cafés, support groups, ...

So, we experience our unique journeys with grief and grieving in different situations throughout our lives, but we are not alone and there are always ways to reach out. We felt very encouraged to look on our own lives and emotions – and we hope you are too!



Hannah S. Kehrein

Photo credit: (1) [Stages of grief](#), (2) [Growing around grief](#), (3) [Secondary losses in grief](#)



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

WOMEN OF FAITH

Mariam Ibrahim

A Sudanese human rights advocate and woman of faith



Mariam [Meriam] Yahia Ibrahim, born 3 November 1987, is a Sudanese religious freedom activist and public speaker. Meriam Ibrahim's birth father is a Muslim, so that according to Islamic law she is a Muslim, leading to her arrest for marrying a Christian man. She was arrested during her second pregnancy for apostasy, sentenced to death shortly there after, giving birth to a girl in prison on 27 May 2014. Mariam Ibrahim's case is part of a wider problem of persecution of Christians in Sudan.

Meriam Ibrahim was born to a Sudanese Muslim father, who left her Ethiopian Orthodox mother to raise her from early childhood. She was raised in her mother's faith and married a Christian man. Meriam Ibrahim was reportedly turned in to the authorities by one of her relatives, who claimed Mariam was committing adultery by marrying Daniel Wani, a Christian (however her marriage certificate has been published). She was sentenced to death on 15 May 2014, for allegedly committing apostasy from Islam (abandoning the Islamic faith), her father's Muslim faith being proof in Islamic law that her religion is Islam. Although Meriam Ibrahim said she has always been a Christian, the prosecution claimed she should have followed the faith of her absent father, and demanded, with the support of the judge, that she abandon her Christian faith, and assent to belief in her father's faith, Islam. Describing how she managed to keep her Bible in prison, Mariam narrated, "I had to cut its pages and hide them in my hair so I could read them in the bathroom. That was the only place I could open it without being discovered. I still carry that prison Bible with me everywhere I go."

"The judge told me that I needed to convert to Islam, and so these warnings made me anticipate I would be sentenced to death" — Meriam Ibrahim.

She was given three days to convert, but refused, arguing that she had been a Christian all her life, and could not rescind or alter her genuine personal faith at the request of a court. Her husband, Daniel Wani, appealed the sentence on both of their behalf. On 24 June 2014 Meriam Ibrahim was released on the order of a Sudanese appeal court. The following day, as she and her family were to board a plane to the United States, they were arrested and taken from the airport to Khartoum for questioning following a tip-off to the police by her half-brother. The US Ambassador was summoned in protest at the granting of an exit visa, described by the Sudanese Foreign Ministry as "a criminal violation". Meriam Ibrahim was freed again on 26 June 2014 and took refuge in the United States embassy with her family.

Source: www.wikipedia.org , presented by Marianna Apresyan, EFECW Co-President



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

EFECW REPRESENTATION

JECI-MIEC International Young Catholic Students

Study Session: “Mental health for all: awareness, action and advocacy”

“In these uncertain times, mental health has become a critical topic worldwide. From 20-24 April 2026, young people gathered at the European Youth Centre Budapest (Council of Europe) to reflect on the challenges we face, including the causes and consequences of declining mental health.”



The JECIMIEC study session on “Mental Health for All: Awareness, Action and Advocacy” was truly one of the best study sessions I have ever attended. From the very beginning, it was clear that a lot of thought, care, and preparation had gone into every detail. The programme was very well organised, and I was never bored, as each activity was engaging, meaningful, and deeply relevant to the theme. I learned a great deal about mental health awareness, the importance of taking action, and the role of advocacy in creating more understanding and supportive communities. I left feeling genuinely inspired and motivated to do something about these issues in my own country.

The preparation team was amazing -always present, helpful, organised, and supportive- and they created a space where everyone felt comfortable, included, and respected. The participants were equally wonderful, and we formed a strong connection during our time together. There was a beautiful sense of openness, trust, and non-judgement, with everyone willing to share their thoughts and personal experiences. These connections have continued even after the study session, as we have planned to stay in touch through Zoom meetings, meet whenever we visit each other’s countries, and hopefully reunite at the Summer Camp. Overall, I am extremely grateful to have had this experience. It was insightful, inspiring, and unforgettable, and I truly believe that everyone should experience something like this at least once in their lifetime.



Photos and Text: Mirella Sava



ECUMENICAL AND WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL NEWS

EU: new Gender Equality Strategy (2026-2030)

At the beginning of March 2026, the European Commission's new Gender Equality Strategy for 2026–2030 was published. The strategy is based on the principles of the previously decided "Roadmap for Women's Rights" and is intended to guide the EU's gender equality work in the coming years. The strategy covers a wide range of areas, such as equal participation in public life, the elimination of violence against women, economic equality and equal health. While it is very positive to have this gender equality strategy in place, a strategy is not enough. We need to see concrete decisions, actions and measures to achieve what is expressed in the strategy.

It is now up to the Commission, the other EU institutions and the EU Member States to make the agenda a reality. While the strategy presents many positive initiatives, binding provisions are also needed, which are not dependent on the varying will of individual Member States. Working towards an EU that fully guarantees women's rights should not be optional. Full text click [here](#).

UN - Commission on the Status of Women 2026



The seventieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 to 19 March 2026. Every March, the largest single global meeting on gender equality and the rights of women and girls takes place at the UN headquarters in New York. This year's theme was women's access to justice, a particularly important theme at a time of setbacks for women's and girls' rights.

The women's movement is needed to promote gender equality reforms. Many countries have made progress in strengthening laws, implementation and measures for the administration of justice. Studies also show that women's rights organizations and feminist movements have been central to promoting legal and policy reforms around the world. Yet progress is slow and, in some cases, even backward. Full text click [here](#).

Carin Gardbring, EFECW Co-president



EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA



Please support:

The Ruth-Epting Fund (www.efecw.net) - which is essential for supporting financially the participation of women in EFECW events!

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

Bank details:

Oekumenisches Forum Christlicher Frauen in Europa

Bank: Schelhammer Capital

IBAN: AT64 1919 0000 0026 9688

SWIFT/BIC: BSSWATWW

Website: www.efecw.net

Email: info@efecw.net

Facebook: EFECW-Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women

Instagram: efecw_official

Podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/@EFECW-Podcast>

<https://open.spotify.com/show/3IfSvAWDEJguyAmEXZtTkO>