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WORLD DAY OF PRAYER JOURNAL



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Come—Everything Is Ready



WRITTEN BY WDP WOMEN OF SLOVENIA



World Day of Prayer Writing Committee, Slovenia

SOCIAL MEDIA



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Contents

FEATURES

- 03** From the Chairperson
Now We All Know the Taste of Potica Cake!
- 04** Worship Service Bible Text
Luke 14:15-24
- 05** From the Writer Country
Come—Everything Is Ready
- 42** Leading Together
- 45** From the Executive Director
Around the Table
- 49** WDP at a Glance

WDP AROUND THE WORLD

- 07** Europe
- 17** Africa
- 23** Asia
- 27** Caribbean & North America
- 31** Latin America
- 36** Middle East
- 39** Pacific



On the Cover: Artwork by Rezka Arnuš for the program written by WDP Slovenia.

Now We All Know the Taste of Potica Cake!

BY LAURENCE GANGLOFF

Dear WDP friends,

I hope you are sitting comfortably and are ready to read over the global picture of the movement! It is a unique opportunity to discover how WDP was celebrated beyond your region and your country.

By reading this entire beautiful magazine, you will discover how the program's main biblical text, Luke 14:15-24, can be understood in different ways. During this year's Service, WDP groups identified themselves in the different figures of the parable of the great banquet. For some WDP groups, it was obvious that we, women, are being called to welcome everybody like the master of the house. For other groups, it was clear that we, women, must act like the servant, constantly leaving the house, inviting everybody to come, proclaiming that "there is still room." And finally for others, they felt closer to the last guests: the poorest and vulnerable.

The master, the servant, the expected guests and the poor and lame new guests, are personages in the parable, whose message is to affirm that nobody is excluded. When God invites, there is still more room. Amazing how one biblical text can provide such deep, animated and different meanings for everyone.



Laurence Gangloff, WDPIC Chairperson

By reading these pages, you will notice some recurrent terms, like: table, banquet, delicious potica, "no good excuses", and of course, many "thank you to the Slovenian sisters."

The Slovenian voices were heard all around the world. This is one of the miracles of WDP! The concerns about being foreigners, getting old and being left behind at the farm, or the integration of Roma people, the fight against violence or drugs and alcohol addiction... it gave us so much reason for rethinking, conversing, and trying to find a way to locally address some of these challenges. Women all around the world easily could identify themselves in the women

of Slovenia. "We were very close to the Slovenian women and their concerns."

Don't forget to take a look at the "WDP at a glance" page. It will give you an overview of the global movement we participate in. When we think we are small, let us remember how big we are, when we are all united in prayer!

In 3 years, we will have the chance to take a global picture of our movement under the theme "New Heart. New Mind. Called to Hope" (Ephesians 1,18). The World Day of Prayer International Committee Meeting in Scotland will be held from June 12 to 19, 2022. Save the date! Why not to start putting aside £1 every day to prepare for your committee's participation?

Before I finish with thanking you for your commitment to WDP, I would like to ask you to receive the next worship service materials like a gift. They come from our Zimbabwean and Ni-Vanuatu sisters. As you receive these prayerful gifts, please listen to new voices with recognition. Add a prayer, if needed but do not change the text.

Thank you, and be sure, that you are blessed by God!

Worship Service Bible Text

LUKE 14:15-24*



The Parable of the Great Dinner

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became



angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’ Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to

come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

*New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

“Come—Everything Is Ready”

BY WDP WOMEN OF SLOVENIA



SLOVENIA



SLOVENIA

As soon as we heard the theme assigned to us, we felt it was very familiar to our context. As Slovenian people are friendly and open handed, the service reflected our feeling that there is a place for everybody at the table. Everybody is welcome, nobody is left aside. The idea of inclusiveness helped people to understand that God’s invitation is to all, even though it can be accepted or rejected. However, when considering the guests we became more sensitive to those around us and our desire to help grew. We learned the pressing needs of the community when

we started visiting some projects for possible WDP support. Some of the needs and initiatives taken to meet them had not been previously obvious to many of us.

The theme was inspired by the Holy Spirit and it had a great impact on people. In the jam-packed Ljubljana’s Cathedral, the Catholic bishop and the Evangelical-Lutheran bishop sat together during the service. Many people saw in the Bishops’ gesture a sign of a very important ecumenical action. Both bishops wrote us a supporting letter.

We worked intensely to advertise our events because we wanted as many participants as possible. In the end, we added two more locations, making a total of eight different places following the WDP program. One of the services counted with the participation of a young choir. There were three additional children’s programs, two with Roma children and one with children from the mothers’ shelter we are supporting.

We are thankful to the secular and religious media for their publications and broadcasts. It was quite surprising to see

The idea of inclusiveness helped people to understand that God’s invitation is to all, even though it can be accepted or rejected.



how well the media responded to this small movement and how well they represented the goals and principles of World Day of Prayer to the general public. It is our hope that this will result in more local groups and children's programs springing up in the next few years, as well as an increase of ecumenical awareness in our highly secularized predominantly Catholic country.

Many WDP women from other countries in Europe visited Slovenia. They came to learn about us first hand, and to experience how much we had in common. We built so many new relationships, as people wanted to help us with project support and visits. This gave us the opportunity to examine our own country with the eyes of outsiders. They encouraged us, gave us strength and support to go further with our movement in Slovenia. We want to deepen



our collaboration and networking with them all.

To be a writer country was a terrific (and a tiring) experience. We were not really aware of what it implied when we first applied back in 2012. But after all, we were happy, thankful and quite proud of ourselves! We succeeded in making the

WDP known in Slovenia, as well as in communicating the situation of Slovenia to the world. How did this experience impact us? We realized we can do anything! We managed to be part of an international event!

Europe



ALBANIA

We felt that the theme this year came from one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible. We were able to relate to the Bible story and share our different stories and personal experiences of being invited to God's table and how we have invited others to our table. We heard the message and we say that there are still empty seats at God's table. We, as Christian women, want to go out into the world and invite everyone to our table. We are a poor country with a corrupted system and many atheists. We rely on each other and work as a community to solve any issues plaguing us. For example, we organize a bazaar around every Christmas or Easter where people can buy and sell things they create. The proceeds then will attend people in need. Next year we would like to organize a soup kitchen!



ARMENIA

The theme was a big blessing for all of us and we thank our Slovenian sisters for their hard work in developing this program! In our service there were two interactions. First, all the participants tried to mention one thing that takes up the most time in their day and second, one prayer that they want to put on the table where everything is ready. It was relevant for the issues of today because sometimes we find ourselves too busy to make time for God. "Come - Everything Is

Ready" shows us that on God's side everything is ready for us and the question for us is - what we have done for this relationship? We are all invited to the feast by God's grace and not because one of us is worthier than the other. We should not make any space for discrimination in our communities.

AUSTRIA

Most of the women in Austria were already quite familiar with Slovenia but they were still able to learn new and interesting things about the country, and engage themselves more in depth with the history and culture of our neighbors. The highlight this year was that during the preparatory phase we had a strong interchange with our sisters in Slovenia. The artist behind the artwork, Rezka Arnuš, was invited to exhibit a collection of her works in the rooms of the WWDP office in Austria and she was even present during



history of political tension, and successfully grasped the opportunity after the collapse of a corrupt system to restore and normalize their country. Ethnical and religious tolerance is another mark of wisdom and maturity of the Slovenian society. We were very much impressed by the recognition of the cultural contribution of the Reformation to the extent of making Reformation Day a national holiday in a prevalingly Catholic country. They are a stimulating example to us! The Bible study proved to be a valuable supplement to the program. The scripture leaves us with no excuse if we overlook our task. We have been invited by God to the Kingdom and we are gladly the Lord's servants.

CROATIA

The program written by women in Slovenia, our neighboring country, was very inspirational. The long-standing common history of our two countries in the former Yugoslavia has left a mark on our ways of life, thinking, and problems we face as a society and as women. The divine table is always ready and everyone is invited, which is often not seen in our daily life because we choose the people we invite to our tables and homes. The Lord teaches us that inclusivity, not exclusivity, is the practice we should follow in life. All women and men are equal in the eyes of God and all are worthy irrespective of their social status, religious affiliation or skin color. For the first time, a worship service conducted by the Vinkovci branch was held outdoors. Random passers-by, children and people with disabilities joyfully engaged in worshipping and sharing personal testimonies.

Website: <http://www.wdp-croatia.com/>



the opening of the exhibition. In addition, there was big support from the Slovenian Embassy to promote the exhibition and the WWDP celebration. Slovenian women who live in Austria participated in celebrations all over the country. Participants appreciated the liturgy because it included challenges we also face in our country, especially the social exclusion of people with disabilities.

Website: <http://weltgebetstag.at>

Facebook: Weltgebetstag der Frauen in Österreich

BELGIUM

We try to reach out and invite different churches in our city to take part in the

preparations and celebration of the program. We produce a promotional leaflet that is handed out at several ecumenical activities in the city. We take turns celebrating the program in a different church each year. We expect that it creates opportunities for new people to hear about the movement and get involved.

Facebook: Wereldgebedsday België

BULGARIA

The program gave us a feeling that Slovenia is an especially blessed country. Not only does it have a beautiful and friendly nature, but it seems that the society has been able to overcome a



DENMARK



ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND

Facebook: Svjetski molitveni dan Hrvatska - World day of prayer Croatia

DENMARK

We received several comments from local organizers about how enjoyable this service was. The women in our country could easily identify with the women of Slovenian and felt very close to the issues they raised. Their concerns about being foreigners, getting old and being left behind, and interacting with Roma people gave us all a reason to think, converse together and find a way to tackle these challenges locally. We do our best in our daily lives to underline the link between prayer and action. The news we hear on the radio, see on the TV, and perceive in our own neighborhoods and around the world are reminders that now, more than ever, our powerful prayers and our actions towards a peaceful world are what matters most.

Website: www.kvindebededag.dk

ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND

Our committee held more than 60 Preparation Days across the country to help the local branch's participants to



ESTONIA

present WDP in their town or village in a meaningful way. This activity is highly beneficial to and ensures the growth of the movement. The response to this year's service was highly positive. One participant stated, "One of the best services I've heard in years – current, relevant, emotive; it raised issues that could be as relevant down the road here as on the other side of the world." The majority of our branches attribute the success to three key parts: a table prepared in sight of the congregation with six featured women invited as guests, an instrumental interlude between the women's stories, and a meditation based on the artwork. These parts of the service helped those present to concentrate on the theme and on its relevance in their context.

Website: www.wwdp.org.uk

Facebook: Women's World Day of Prayer England Wales and Northern Ireland

Twitter: @WWDPforEWNI

ESTONIA

Services were held across five towns. Our local service is usually held in Tallin, but this year it was held in a small Baptist church in a nearby parish called Viimsi. This was the first time our service was held outside of Tallin and the differences were astounding! The church hall was full of eager participants who were all personally touched by the theme. We choose to have a short sermon, done by a local pastor, and held discussions based on the theme afterwards. It was quite a lively moment! It started as sharing in small groups and then two leaders took the microphone to lead the conversation over the hall. The atmosphere was very warm and open. Everyone gave thanks for such a wonderful service written by our Slovenian sisters.

FINLAND

The theme highlighting the importance of hospitality was very contemporary for the people of our country today.



Recently, our government has been tackling the topic of immigration which has garnered strong opposition views among our citizens. Violent news stories attributed to refugees began to dangerously turn minds radical against immigration. But should a whole group of individuals be judged by the actions of some? The WDP service reminded us of God's love for all and encouraged us to keep our hearts and minds open. The Bible story was dramatized as a pantomime while one person read the parable. It raised animated discussions among our participants. We enjoyed learning about our European sisters and praying in unity with them.

Website: www.ywca.fi

FRANCE

We thank our sisters from Slovenia for a generous invitation! The worship service was well balanced and prayerful. The Bible text illustrated the theme perfectly and we identified with each of the characters. The invitation was a demonstration of what receiving our neighbors is all about. We often think of ourselves first, but let us learn to accept what our neighbors have to offer. During the service we considered how we would react if



our invitation was ignored. How can we extend the prayerful spirit beyond this one single day? Does the love that burns in our hearts urge us to invite others to come and partake in the celebration? We laid out the table after having grasped the importance of caring for God's creation for future generations. It was like seeing the illustration of a church open to all women, children, youth, and men.

Website: <http://jmp.protestants.org>
 Facebook: Journée Mondiale de Prière France - JMP

GERMANY

On the first Friday of March, the alarm clocks ring in millions of German houses. We long to feel strongly connected to all

the Christian women and especially with the Slovenian women, who made this day very special for us. There is empowerment and joy in our hearts.

Catchy, cheerful and folkloristic melodies, a joyful invitation to the banquet, and a challenging Bible story opened our doors and hearts. The service inspired us to try new ideas just as the man in the Bible story. We made a live stream of the service available and many people appreciated the opportunity to share in the celebration. It breaks our hearts to know that some churches still do not allow Christians from other denominations to join in their worship, therefore we send an ecumenical communiqué to all of our church leaders asking them to open God's table to all Christians!

Website: <https://weltgebetstag.de/en/>
 Facebook: Weltgebetstag
 Twitter: @weltgebetstagD
 Instagram: @weltgebetstag

GREECE

On the day of the celebration, we saw the fruits of our hard labor in promoting WDP after some of the vital changes our committee introduced to the activity.



GREECE



HUNGARY

There is a need to revive the movement and increase participation. Our local service was one of the most special and heartwarming celebrations we have ever held. Former drug addicts gave a sincere testimony about their struggle and how they were able to overcome addiction and enjoy God's gifts. Their story reminded us that God works miracles and nothing is impossible even when you feel totally helpless and hopeless in your life. The time devoted to spontaneous prayers united us all and helped us feel the spiritual presence of our Lord. Let us all remind ourselves that God loves each one of us, no matter our color, our race, our financial situation, our mistakes... stop judging and start loving instead.

HUNGARY

To invite someone or to accept an invitation in our context today is a big challenge. It is hard both personally and communally to open up for each other, and to make a really effective invitation. We, as servants of God, need to be more resourceful, braver and trusting in God's invitation. The preparation process and meditation reflected on difficulties like how to address somebody, how to accept each other, how to handle excuses and how to build communities. It was really

uplifting to see the pictures of Slovenian women and listen to their stories in the worship service. The invitation to pray with them became more realistic and personal. We focused on the children's program to extend our invitation to the younger generation. One youth said: "Although I am Hungarian, when I was reading the service and praying with Slovenia, my heart shined in red, white and blue colors."

Website: www.vilagimanap.hu
 Facebook: WDP Hungary - Ökumenikus Világimanap

ICELAND

We loved the program. It was very thought provoking to learn about the different circumstances of women's lives in Slovenia. The hardships upon Slovenia in the midst of war, as a former Yugoslav country, reminded us of the days of World War II. Groups of women in our country prayed every day for those



ICELAND

suffering the harm inflicted by war. We felt close to our sisters throughout the service. The beauty, smell, and taste of Slovenian culture were showcased in our decorations and refreshments. We were inspired by the theme and the WDP motto to support an ecumenical organization dedicated to assisting women and children who are Syrian refugees. The stories of the women and children have motivated our prayers to take on the form of prayerful action. A yearly prayer walk in Vestmanna has also been organized to make WDP more visible in our community.

Facebook: Alþjóðlegur bænadagur kvenna



IRELAND

We received a lot of positive feedback from participants about how reflective, thoughtful, and meaningful the theme for the meditation and worship service, and also the children's program were. In preparation for the service, it became apparent to us that the women of Slovenia highlighted many issues that are experienced globally. The theme spoke of inclusivity and so for the first time ever, a WDP service led by committee members was held at the Mosney Reception Centre for asylum seekers and refugees. It reflected the welcoming nature of God where all are included and loved. Our committee's local service was televised and broadcasted on Ireland's National TV and Radio Broadcaster. Our musical guest was a group of brilliantly talented, visually impaired musicians called Classic Harmony. Our guest speaker was an asylum seeker from Malawi who shared with us her story of arriving in Ireland nearly 10 years ago.

Facebook: Women's World Day of Prayer Ireland

ITALY

We felt very close to our Slovenia sisters as we prepared for their worship service

and celebrated it in March. The problems they outlined in the service are the same ones we experience everyday: migration, loneliness of the elderly, uncertain future for the youth, and prejudice towards Roma people. It was important to realize how much in common we share. The churches that form our committee are involved with a project called "Mediterranean Hope" which consists of humanitarian corridors to allow the safe transit of migrants in need of escape from a crisis in their region. However, our government is currently trying to launch new laws that would criminalize projects like this one. We pray that the relationships among people will improve. This year we were able to reach out and invite new women to the WDP movement who have embraced the motto and principles enthusiastically.

LUXEMBOURG

Our worship service was full of enthusiasm expressed by the children and adults who participated. The theme was used as a real invitation for all in our community to come and see what the



WDP movement is all about. It reminded us that we should always have a free seat at the table and be ready to welcome anyone. Participants discovered a country not so far from their own with very similar issues. The story of the Slovenian woman struggling with problems associated with alcohol really touched a lot of people, as it is a very common issue in our country. It made us aware that there is always a solution with the help of friends and the Lord. In the end, we all face the same situation and we must continue to seek ways to help women in our community, and promote the positive message behind the WDP movement.

Website:

<http://www.acfl.lu/de/weltgebetstag>

Facebook: WDP Lëtzebuerg



NORWAY



PORTUGAL

NORWAY

Last autumn our committee visited Slovenia and met with the dedicated WDP women responsible for writing the service. We were able to see firsthand how they worked with the trauma healing project. The experience inspired and motivated us to work just as hard. A great number of churches opened their doors for this great prayer event. In the town of Tønsberg, seven denominations were represented and each member took turns reading through the service. Refreshments were served before the service to increase youth participation. In Drammen, 18 denominations participated and a 14 year old boy was in charge of the technical equipment. In Oslo, the Salvation Army beautifully decorated their space with Slovenian elements and baked a potica. The Mission Church in Kråkstad hosted a service and one participant said “This is a unique opportunity to lift each other up in prayer, together with women who carry heavy burdens.”

Website: <https://bonnedag.com/>

POLAND

In Poznan, representatives of Lutheran, Methodist and Roman Catholic churches

jointly prepared the service. We came together in God’s Grace Lutheran Church, and the woman who led the liturgy sat at a symbolic table placed at the front of the church. Our thoughts and prayers were with the Slovenian women who told us their stories through the worship service. God with great love and kindness invites us to the feast. We reflected on God’s invitation, on our relationship with our Creator and with other human beings. As an ecumenical community, in our churches, we promote respect and understanding of others from our communities. We ask God constantly to open our eyes and hearts to the needs of other people. Let us have trust in God’s grace and accept the invitation. Let us go with joy and bring others too, as it was the exhortation of our sisters from Slovenia.

Website: <https://ekumenia.pl/>
Facebook: Polska Rada Ekumeniczna

PORTUGAL

The worship service program under the theme “Come – Everything Is Ready”



POLAND

was simple and relevant. It made us reflect on those who need us the most but are often forgotten because we do not always consider them a priority. The local groups prepared invitations to the celebrations not only for fellow Christians, but also for friends and neighbors, who may not have heard God’s call. In our country, it is not easy to call people to the church but we maintain a positive attitude and do our best to spread the message. In Porto, there is a church activity held once a month called “Tea of the 5” in which different church groups get together and celebrate under a common biblical theme and worship together. Our group took this opportunity to share the theme of the Slovenia worship service and promote the WDP movement.



REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

The theme was very consonant for the Transcaucasia countries, where hospitality is important. Therefore, our communities responded to Slovenia's invitation with great enthusiasm! We work hard every year to prepare for the celebration and promote the WDP movement. In 2018 we hosted a women's seminar in Kvareli, which many people wanted to attend. More than what we prepared for! Across five days, participants received comprehensive information about the WDP writer country. They creatively studied the biblical theme, learned songs, did needlework related to the focus country, acted out scenes, and watched documentaries and feature films about Slovenia. They were also given posters and music CDs for the worship programs. Earlier in the year, we held regular rehearsals with representatives of different churches. Those activities really united us. The WDP program was also conducted during children's Sunday school, where they enjoyed learning about the country and doing arts and crafts.

ROMANIA

Every year it is great to feel the connection with all our sisters and brothers around the world as we all concentrate our

prayers on one single country. While preparing for the celebration we learned the importance of denominations collaborating with each other and respecting the traditions and beliefs of others. Although we are all different we know that we are the beloved children of God! As guests at the Lord's Table we are able to share our love, spiritual goods, healing, encouragement, and strength with the people around us. The Roman Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Evangelicals, women, men, children, the elderly, people with special needs, and those who speak different languages—celebrated together. The theme truly made us feel ready to worship and the royally set table was a symbol for the unity with our Lord. In God, we are all the same, thus loved, protected, and sheltered.

SCOTLAND

We received positive remarks from organizers across our country about how wonderful this service was. Tables were set, invitations sent, and carnations



given out as gifts. Everyone immersed themselves in the Slovenian culture by decorating their spaces with the flag, artwork, and photos, and singing the hymns provided. The theme was thought provoking and many could relate to the issues highlighted by the Slovenian women. Listening to their stories reminded us that it is important to hear about the struggles of women around the world so we know what to pray for and what actions need to be taken to seek justice.

We began offering Information Days around the country. At this activity, local WDP organizers can get help and advice when preparing for the service. This has become also an excellent opportunity to invite younger individuals to the church and get familiar with the movement.



SERBIA



SLOVAKIA



SPAIN

Website: www.wdpscotland.org.uk
 Facebook: World Day of Prayer Scotland

SERBIA

Our country and Slovenia were formerly part of the Yugoslavian republic. We are very familiar with them and share many of the same traditions, culture, and historical contexts. During the service we could not help but remember some of the warm memories of visiting Slovenian spas and drinking water out of wells. We were also reminded of the painful memories of the Yugoslav war in the 90s that led to our separation as independent countries. We are grateful to God, that after a very turbulent period in our history we have managed to live in peace, tolerance, and understanding for many years. We prayed sincerely and wholeheartedly for the wellbeing and prosperity of Slovenia and its people. We look forward to sitting together with our brothers and sisters

around the Lord's Table and having a grand feast together. We are proud of the ecumenical cooperation between our churches and strive to

move forward in our journey of seeking to live in a reconciling way.

SLOVAKIA

God invited us all this year to share in prayer a sense of spiritual unity with the Slovenian women. This program was particularly important to us because of the many similarities between our country and Slovenia, including how similar the names sound. We felt very close to our sisters knowing that the climate, culture, traditions, and overall life in Slovenia were familiar to us. Even the potica cake mentioned is similar to a nut strudel we often make.

Our service was organized at a Roman Catholic Church and was attended by many women, men, and youths. Before the main service, a youth mass was held to encourage young people to attend

and participate in WDP events. During the celebration we met a man from Slovenia living in Slovakia, who was surprised to hear that people all over the world were praying for his small country!

Facebook: Ekumenický Svetový deň modlitieb žien Slovenská republika
 Facebook: <https://sites.google.com/site/sdmslovensko/>

SPAIN

Services were celebrated in Madrid, Barcelona, Sabadell, Los Rubios, Alicante and Zaragoza. We enjoyed learning about the history of Slovenia, their difficulties and their newfound prosperity. Indeed, we all found their history relevant in light of the resurgence of political tensions in Spain. The exchange of cultural experiences that the WDP offers brings new life to our churches. This year we were pleased to reincorporate the Salvation Army into our national committee. As they have taught us: "Those who arrive on one side of the table to receive often move in time to the other side of the table to serve." We all experience love



SWEDEN

and warmth in the banquet of God. We give thanks to God for the opportunity to be faithful servants in the world and for the privilege of sharing our faith with sisters from other communities.

SWEDEN

Many of our local groups expressed appreciation for a well composed and relevant worship service. The celebration easily balanced both a joyful and serious tone. It was a joy to be part of a worldwide prayer community and reflect on the seriousness of the message given. Many agreed that we have to continue to pray for peace and reconciliation. Groups enjoyed baking potica, singing "Celebration", and dramatizing the Bible text with a liturgical dance. In Sollentuna, a Slovenia female reverend, spoke about her childhood back home and the meaning behind the items lay out on the table. In another church, a Slovenian woman wore her beautiful folk dress and a male Slovenian pastor presented a slide show of his country. He invited the congregation to sign a card for a parish in Slovenia he would visit. At another church, a young Slovenian woman sang hymnals in her native language.

Website: www.svekumeniskakvinnor.se



SWITZERLAND



UKRAINE

Facebook: Sveriges Ekumeniska Kvinnoråd - SEK

SWITZERLAND

A group of members from our committee had the opportunity to visit WDP Slovenia in May 2018. They were guided by a member of the Slovenian committee and had beautiful and impressing encounters with persons of local institutions our committee has helped support. One of the organizations, Zavod Pelikan Karitas Materinski Dom, is a safe haven for women and their children who are living in distress situations. This personal experience inspired our regional and local WDP events and celebrations. As Switzerland is a major immigration destination for Slovenians, many Slovenian women participated in several WDP services. They enriched the celebrations with their musical, cultural and culinary contributions! Celebrations were often presented as an invitation to a banquet,

which was very suitable for a shared meal after the worship service, a tradition in many communities. Successful and failed invitations were discussed by the community from personal perspectives during the meditation.

Website: www.wgt.ch

UKRAINE

The WDP service was celebrated with much interest and enthusiasm. The Bible text and theme helped us bring together people of different denominations in common prayer for all. During the WDP preparation process, we realized the importance of knowing not only our needs but the needs of others. Because there are many similarities between the historical past of Slovenia and Ukraine, we identified ourselves in their struggles and prayed for our common issues.

It is important for us to feel like we are an integral part of the Christian community. WDP helps us with that and leads us to be aware about what goes on in the world, the problems and joys of different peoples. It encourages us to face our own problems. We are in the middle of war and every day we pray for our soldiers. We send them supplies when possible and patiently await their return home.

Africa



The theme of this celebration challenged us to take our rightful positions as Christian women and bring hope to the broken hearted and to have mercy on the trouble minded.

BOTSWANA

After hearing the stories of the Slovenian women and the issues they raised we realized those problems are faced in our country as well. The broken vessels in our midst need to be made aware that the invitation to God's table is always available. The word of God is about peace and love. The women created are talented, blessed, and favored. The theme of this celebration challenged us to take our rightful positions as Christian women and bring hope to the broken hearted and to have mercy on the trouble minded. It challenged us to strive to be a better nation, where no one is poor or abused. We will not refuse his call and invite anyone we can to our table. Each preparatory meeting we have brings growth to the fellowship when women and the youth gather to experience WDP. Our ecumenical relationships grow stronger every year.

Facebook: World Day of Prayer-Botswana

CAMEROON

In the four corners of the country, there was cohesion between the English and



French speaking worship services. The different denominations and ecumenical associations enhanced the experience of celebrating together under a common program. The theme challenged our committee to reaffirm that our duty as Christians and ambassadors of Christ is to love God and love our neighbor by inviting on every occasion, people from all social strata, without any discrimination. We must offer hospitality and share our bread with others including those we deem as enemies. Our country is going through a deep socio-political crisis in the North West and South West regions. This has caused

internal displacements of populations fleeing armed conflicts. It is our duty of solidarity to support our brothers and sisters with food, shelter, and basic care. We put into practice the hospitality, the love and the compassion that the Lord expects of us.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

God invites us to share in the feast, which is actually the word of the Lord, but very few listen to it and put it into practice. The speaker reminded the whole congregation to participate in the meal that gives eternal life and that



heals. We must not look for reasons, pretexts, or excuses as these will make us miss the good news that is the word of life. The inspired prayers to God have challenged us to a high dimension of our Christian faith. As for the celebration, the program was translated into the local language and distributed to each province. The banquet table was prepared as suggested by the Slovenian sisters. We collaborated perfectly with the leadership of the Protestant, Catholic, and the Salvation Army Churches. We also involved young people in reading the liturgy and singing in choirs.

GABON

Our National Committee has always worked under the inspiration of the WDP motto “Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action.” We initiated a number of activities to be able to identify those in need and provide support. Then, we organized prayer retreats to attend those people. Catholics and Protestants are the two major groups engaged in WDP and we want to expand our ecumenical relationships. This is our hope. The theme of the program reaffirmed that commitment.



Beyond the Bible study, we organized skits based on the great feast and the women participating got all dressed up for the occasion. The scripture of Luke 14:15-24, was complemented by a reading of Isaiah 25:6-9. The feast has been prepared, the invitation sent, and the veil that has been stretched over all nations has been destroyed. The Lord is always there for us to provide us with salvation. We need to make ourselves available and accept the call.

GHANA

The theme sparked several discussions about food security and agriculture,

which is slowly diminishing in our country as a result of rapid urbanization. However, we realized that no matter how difficult things may appear, God always provides. The hope we have in Christ was revitalized. One person said, “God is truly good; a table is set for us every day. We wake up in the morning without money, and by the end of the day God has set a table before us. Never a day passes without us having something to eat.”

The Bible study materials were used extensively by various women’s groups in the churches at various meetings. Children services were held in three locations, which was very exciting. One of them evolved into a great party with a long table set up with assorted food and sweets.

IVORY COAST

On the day of the WDP program, we all felt as if we were Slovenians. Listening to the voices of the Slovenian women, we became aware of the different conditions our own sisters face in their daily lives. The sharing of their experiences gave hope to many who felt lonely, aban-



done and sometimes even stigmatized. Through the Bible passage they understood that our Lord has a plan for those who are rejected and helpless. The Lord prepared everything for those who rely on him. They decided, at the end of the celebration, to mobilize and become agents of their own personal development and empowerment. The fact that several denominations come together to intercede in the same spirit for a better life for the Slovenian sisters is proof of the unity in Christ Jesus, our common savior. Indeed we are all members of the same body; the body of Christ.

KENYA

We firstly want to thank the WDP women of Slovenia for writing a wonderful service under the theme “Come – Everything Is Ready” The scripture clearly tells us that we must have a good relationship with each other. We must consider other people and not selfishly think about ourselves. When we are united we can achieve our goals. We asked ourselves, what have we done to our friends for them not to accept our invitation? Why did we ignore their invitation? Participants really enjoyed discussing and reflecting on the theme. Many agreed that we should never turn to spite or revenge if our invitation goes unanswered. We must forgive and continue to open our hearts to others. What

a great blessing it will be for us all to eat in the Kingdom of God.

MALAWI

The WDP women of Malawi thank the women of Slovenia for inviting us to the set table and praise the Lord. The theme was very touching and it showed us that we must live in the moment of the feast and rejoice in our communities and churches. More of us need to receive Jesus and open our doors to the more poor and vulnerable in our society. We were blessed enough to celebrate the service once again in a stadium in the Mangochi district. We were honored that the First Lady of the Republic of Malawi attended the service just as she did last year. Her presence motivates and encourages all the women in our country. Jesus’ love and grace will be preached and practiced every day in our lives and the Holy Spirit will guide us as we take on the challenge of serving others in need.

MAURITIUS

We always celebrate the WDP program on March 12, which is Independence Day



in Mauritius, and in that way we pray for both countries. The service began with a chorus rendition of “All United in Jesus” and was followed by “Celebration” from the Slovenia program. In the capital, the preaching was done by the Treasurer of the National Committee of the World Day of Prayer. She also organized a big meal where everyone was invited, including the homeless who come on Saturdays for worship and a hot meal. The potica cake, prepared by a youth, was served as a dessert. Participants enjoyed learning about the similarities and differences of the two countries. The Bible study was well animated and made us reflect on how the story could be called a “parable of excuses,” like an invitation that goes into nothingness. Jesus teaches us the price of a life of discipleship.



the WDP celebration, the Archbishop of our main cathedral used the theme as an invitation during the Eucharist – God calling to each and every one to receive the body and blood of Christ. The celebration itself was a success. Getting to learn and understand the situation of those living in other countries has always been of key interest. Slovenia is a far-away country with differences and similarities to our country, the beauty of God’s creation! Pictures and information pamphlets outside of the church drew a crowd. Even tourists participated in the service and shared in the festivities.

SIERRA LEONE

The theme was very stimulating and has empowered the WDP to move forward. Our community was very pleased with the program as it allowed us to get a clear visual picture of Slovenia. We used the prayers and contextualized them to our own situation. Women from different ecumenical backgrounds shared their own experiences and reflections of the theme. For example, one explained how she was able to get an education as an adult, after growing up illiterate, and how she is helping others do the same. Another woman shared how she was once an alcoholic but through prayers and support was able to change her lifestyle completely.

NIGERIA

Our WDP committee would like to underscore the importance of appreciating and reciprocating God’s radical love. The theme to us was about honoring God’s invitation to love one another, to love our enemies and forgive them their trespasses. The invitation is an opportunity for us to partake in God’s grace and mercy in our everyday lives and into eternity, after we are welcomed into the Kingdom prepared for us. Why should we take God’s love for granted by making excuses that are not even tenable with respect to our fellow human beings? Recently, our country has been

plagued by insurgency, violence, banditry and kidnapping, resulting in insecurity, economic hardships and untold suffering. The ideas generated by the services dwell on the need to make ourselves examples so that others will know the love and acceptance of God.

SEYCHELLES

Long before our committee started basic preparations for our WDP service, we as a church discussed and tried to understand how and why God created us to serve. To serve God, not only by attending church but by supporting and praying for our brothers and sisters. Prior to



SOUTH AFRICA

We are children of the light and it is our mission to go out into the world and enlighten those in the darkness and bring them to the feast.



SUDAN

Apart from the worship service a convention was held on the 18th of May to help us examine the theme more critically. Key speakers were present and they spoke on the theme from different points of views, from financial management to anti-corruption.

SOUTH AFRICA

Congregations across our country made great efforts to present the theme as proposed in the program. Rosemary was used to encourage participants to symbolically spread the lovely smell of God's mercy in the world. In Johannesburg, the seating was arranged in a manner that had all participants seated at the table. Slovenian cakes were served. Carnations either crafted from tissue paper or fresh, were given out to participants. One characteristic of WDP in South Africa is that churches work together on an ecumenical platform, where the service is presented in English, Afrikaans and Zulu.

Our WDP women are very focused on practical ways to spread the Gospel and

the motto of the WDP. Several projects are underway such as handing out food parcels to those in shelters, bringing sanitary napkins to young girls in school, supplies for those staying in hospitals or retirement homes, and soup kitchens.

Website: www.wwdp.co.za

SUDAN

We had five major services with over 3,000 participants. The children and youth participated by singing, reading, and acting in dramatizations. It was a great honor and all the people felt united in spirit. We were grateful for the opportunity to learn about a new country, especially when we realized that we had so much in common. Our women and the youth shared their experiences of also suffering from alcoholism and drug abuse.

The theme was meaningful for us. It taught us a lesson on how God always call us towards the Kingdom, but we do not always listen or respond, just like

those who were invited for supper but made excuses as to why they could not attend. We must be more committed to the promises of God's work.

TOGO

The WDP program opens our eyes to a new country every year and asks us to intercede. By our prayers the Lord can offer solutions to the struggles we share globally. From the other side of the world we could feel the presence of our sisters in Slovenia during the worship service. The theme reminded us of the love of God for all of humanity. God so loved the world that his son was given to wipe us of our sins and guide us to the Kingdom. We are children of the light and it is our mission to go out into the world and enlighten those in the darkness and bring them to the feast. It is like when one withdraws from the community because they feel as if they cannot contribute positively, and then with prayer and regular visits, the person returns to the community with renewed light.



UGANDA

Even though, our story does not represent a national committee in Uganda, the WDP program was celebrated in Kampala by a group of South Sudanese Christians at St. Stephen Kitara Church. We had 62 participants from the Catholic, Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches. It was organized by the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan Kampala Parish. To be united together in a new experience was the highlight of the celebration! We are excited to have participated in the prayers and we look forward to it again next year!

ZAMBIA

We hosted several services with thousands of participants. We made the service available in seven different languages making it available to as many people as possible. Youth centers held services which ensured youth

participation. They were able to reflect on the Bible story by performing dramatizations. Churches have begun to include WDP on their calendars, meaning that WDP is the only program celebrated that day. We have been able to spread the word about the movement throughout the country and people have come to cherish the WDP because each year the theme brings new understanding. The theme this year had us focus on inclusiveness and caring for others, not only in our churches but in our communities. Our committee has taken this lesson along with our motto “Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action” to support women, orphans, and the other underprivileged as a way of putting wheels to our prayer and taking action.

ZIMBABWE

“Through these World Day of Prayer services our lives are transformed for each

year we learn more about the love of God which transforms us and gives us hope.” A participant made this comment during the celebrations held in March. It reminded us that the worship service unites us all – the young, the old, the country we pray for, and the communities we live in. The Slovenia program itself highlighted the importance of loving one another. To avoid discrimination and to make time to speak to God and intercede for the needy, mothers of children with special needs, and others. We believe that when we pray for others, others will be praying for us, for most of the challenges being faced are global issues. We need to encourage ourselves into action and act upon God’s word to show the world that we want things to be better for everyone.

We have been able to spread the word about the movement throughout the country and people have come to cherish the WDP because each year the theme brings new understanding.

Asia



BANGLADESH

The theme this year was very motivational and inspiring. The Bible story under “Come – Everything Is Ready” defined to us how God invites all people to the table. We live in a pluralistic society where people of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds coexist. It can be difficult at times to live together peacefully but during events like WDP, we can feel the spirit of ecumenism. We take these opportunities to welcome those, who do not know Christ, into our hearts just as God has called us to the table. God’s love and grace is for everyone.

Facebook: @nccbfanpage

HONG KONG

World Day of Prayer is jointly organized by seven denominations, coordinated by the Hong Kong Christian Council. The celebration is very meaningful for our churches. Focusing annually on a different country from another part of the



world has helped to open up our hearts and minds. Learning about the problems and suffering of others, the WDP helps Christians in our country to engage through informed prayer and prayerful action from a global perspective.

Our worship service began by listening to the stories of the Slovenian women. We thanked God for leading the Slovenian people to overcome their hardships. A joint women’s choir from the different denominations sang together for God’s

glory. Our pastor focused on the core message of the theme. We too often resist or delay responding to God’s invitation, and our excuses may sound reasonable but greater efforts must be made to respond to God’s call.

Website: <http://www.hkcc.org.hk>

JAPAN

It must be emphasized that, for the very first time, a WDP celebration was held in Tokyo during the evening to give



younger women a chance to attend the program after work. This development is important for us as we intend to get young people to participate in the services and involved in the movement. We started distributing leaflets and promoting WDP's motto of "Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action." Those who participated for the first time were very impressed by the theme and felt like they were united through the worship service. They expressed their appreciation for the ecumenical movement. Regardless of the size of the venue or the number of participants, many groups made various efforts to enliven the celebration. Examples of those initiatives are selling crops they farmed themselves, getting traditional Slovenian recipes from the embassy, and holding a Q&A conversation about the theme after the worship service.

Website: <http://cloister171.blog.fc2.com/> and www.ncc-j.org
 Facebook: @nccinapan

MALAYSIA

The theme "Come - Everything Is Ready" is a challenge for people today. What will their reaction be to this invitation? The passage taken from the Bible



depicts today's response to God's call by many. Similar to the three characters in the parable, many of us give excuses for not coming to God's table. In today's hectic life with many challenges, our priorities are different and God takes second place. Some people are very status conscious and will inquire who the invited guests are before accepting an invitation to a party. If one attends a feast only to find that those present were the outcasts of society, I wonder what their reaction will be. Will they walk out or accept those present?

The worship services were conducted in various churches and some women dressed up in Slovenian dresses. Children excitedly learned about Slovenia and made a bee headband from cardboard.

NEPAL

It was a blessing for the Asian Church Women's Conference to celebrate World Day of Prayer. Although we were a small group from different churches and different faiths, we had a wonderful time together. We began the service with a song, and by remembering the women and children around the world, especially our sisters in Slovenia who prepared the program. Learning about WDP and the culture of Slovenia was very enriching. The description of the artwork was inspiring and heartwarming. We felt connected with our Slovenian sisters and close in spirit. After reading the Bible story there was a moment of sharing and discussion. Together we joined hands to glorify God and uplift the WDP sisters in prayer. We thank our sisters for sharing with us in prayer and allowing us to be a part of the World Day of Prayer movement.

PAKISTAN

World Day of Prayer is celebrated across Pakistan among different denominations that include Church of Pakistan (union of former Anglican and Lutheran churches), United Presbyterian Church, and the Salvation Army. We do it with



dedication and fervor. We feel that World Day of Prayer is a moment for prayers and reflection to understand and strengthen global sisterhood. We, as women, learn and draw encouragement and strength from our global sisters' faith stories.

About 500 copies of the program were translated into Urdu, our national language, and distributed. The worship service written by Slovenian women was very creative and inspiring. It presented the beauty, the religious and political history, and the rich cultural diversity that the country has to offer. The socio-economic issues of today were brought to light. For us, Pakistani Christian women, being the minority in a predominantly Islamic country, we felt the pain and experiences of Slovenes as our own.

SINGAPORE

This year our WDP committee changed our style of worship. We organized a worship team to lead the service with contemporary music. The worship team performed with the accompaniment of their guitars, bass and keyboard. The sweet aroma of music filled the air as we lifted our voices and heart to God. Our meeting room table was set and placed with national flowers, spices and loaves of



bread frequently used and consumed by the people in Slovenia. Homemade red carnations were crafted by the committee and distributed to all the ladies present. It really enhanced the worship service. Our guest speaker also shared the Bible story of 2 Samuel 9, which outlined the invitation of David to Mephibosheth to feast at the King's table. The same invitation has been extended to us all to feast at the Lord's table. We were reminded to share and bring someone to feast.

SOUTH KOREA

Korean Church Women United begins preparations for the WDP service every year in September. Our members have several meetings to go over the worship service materials and understand the meaning of the theme, the Bible text, and learn about the focus country. The service is held in 70 locations and new

areas are added every year which is important for the expansion of WDP. Solidarity does not come easily however, 18 denominations participated in WDP activities. Those who were unfamiliar with WDP ended up enjoying the service and were filled with abundant grace. Each year the service presents new challenges and we feel encouraged to tackle them and fully live through "Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action." This year our office also worked on an extensive collection of WDP worship services from 1990-2019. We published it into a book and shared it with all of our members and ecumenical partners.

Website: www.kcwu.org

SRI LANKA

Our main service was held in Colombo. It was a very meaningful service with the



ecumenical participation of several denominations. Youth participants performed a skit and assisted with the music. Another service was held at a refugee home called “Karuna Nilayam” in Kilinochchi which was an even more uplifting experience as the participants were women who had all experienced hardships due to the civil war in our country. They were able to strongly identify with the Slovenian women. Some of the hardships these women have endured are sometimes beyond comprehension. A young widow struggles to simultaneously work and raise three young daughters. An 83-year-old woman, who was orphaned and abandoned at Karuna Nilayam as a young child, finds herself back at this home now that her children are unable to care for her. These women found comfort in the unity of prayer and the reminder that they are not alone.

TAIWAN

Women from all regions and ethnic groups in the country get very excited for WDP. Many services were held across the country in churches, schools and

community centers. Preparations started in early January and in the months that followed women held various meetings and rehearsals, so that they could get familiar with the theme and scripture to fully immerse themselves in a new foreign culture. Slovenia is a relatively unfamiliar country and yet in prayer we were not far away. We found that there were many similarities and that both of us faced common problems. Historical and political tensions have plagued our countries for years and our long term prayer is that one day we will be at peace. We believe God’s justice will prevail. The theme of “Come—Everything Is Ready” emphasized that the church shall be full of joy and open to all people. Everyone is welcome.

Website: <http://women.pct.org.tw/>
 Facebook: @WDPTaiwan and 世界公禱日聯合崇拜

THAILAND

We are grateful to the World Day of Prayer movement for helping us learn more about a new country every year. We believe that the program motivates

people to view the world from another perspective and learn the value of human life as created in the image of God. Women are given hope and the tools to fight for their rights and make a difference. There were many services across the country with thousands of participants. A WDP service was held in seven different schools with children and youth participating happily. The theme, prayers, actions, Bible study, and ecumenical relationships were all essential in creating a positive and welcoming atmosphere, uniting us all in celebration.

The theme of “Come—Everything Is Ready” emphasized that the church shall be full of joy and open to all people. Everyone is welcome.

Caribbean and North America



BAHAMAS

For our local worship service, a banquet table was set up at the front of the church to symbolize the Bible story and bring Slovenia into the culture of the Bahamas. It literally compelled all who entered to stop, look, smell the flowers and taste the spices, food and drinks, for indeed - everything was ready! Committee members brought out the story of the Master's feast vividly and dramatically in their prayers and presentations. The two guest speakers invited the congregation to reach out to those who are homeless, refugees, ex-prisoners, and people living alone with AIDS.

Our National Committee has grown tremendously and we now have five other islands participating in WDP events. We look forward to including more in the coming years. We would like to continuously meet every month for in-depth study of the Bible and WDP materials, and preparations for churches, schools, and special groups.



BARBADOS

The theme this year was very well received by the members of the various churches who attended the symposium we hosted when we were preparing for the services. During that time our guest speaker, a Salvationist preacher, brought to life the scripture in such a way that others used her reflection to prepare other sermons leading up to the service in March. Our committee is also in the process of writing WDP related articles and sharing them with the media in order to generate more attention for the movement outside of the services in March.

CANADA

This year's theme lent itself very well to inviting people of all denominations to the service and expanding WDP!



Services were held across the country and much of the feedback that we received from local churches about the program indicated that the service was very well done! Many services featured traditional Slovenian dress or had greetings brought from members of local Slovenian organizations. Flags, carnations, and Slovenian photos adorned halls, tables, and reception areas alike. Services featured banquet tables. The act of sitting together in prayer and in solidarity with the women of Slovenia was gratifying. Our goal for 2020 is to have more services on different days to encourage a younger demographic to join the celebration. We also host events

GUYANA



JAMAICA



such as the World Day of Prayer Mobilize against Human Trafficking, an ecumenical activity that goes beyond the service to address local and national issues regarding human trafficking.

Website: www.wicc.org
Facebook: @WICCanada
Twitter: WICC_CA

GUYANA

Our WDP service was beautiful. We were impacted by the Bible story as it reminded us that often times, creating excuses for missing an invitation is wrong. Sometimes we each have to go and receive whatever opportunity is in store for us. People were touched and inspired by attending both the worship service and the children's service. Our children's service always has a massive turn out of children from many different denominations. They usually are very responsive, and this year was no different, as we had volunteers to participate in different activities. They especially enjoyed the games the writer country provided. Even though the committee is made up of different denominations, we see each other

as one in the eyes of God. The WDP motto helps us focus on praying for our nations, so that we can be better citizens, care for the environment and give back to the community.

JAMAICA

We had a long and lively local celebration! The service included music, singing, scripture dramatization and a reflection. The readings of each Slovenian woman were done by one member of each denomination present. During the reflection, the question was posed "Why did the invitees refuse to attend the banquet?" The invitation was free and yet they made excuses not to attend. Our minister reminded us that invitations of grace must never be taken for granted. God's grace is given freely however, we often fail to accept. When we reject Christ, we reject the blessings of the Kingdom of God. We prayed to always remain faithful. We lifted up the issues brought forth by the women of Slovenia which are prevalent in our country as well, such as domestic violence, unemployment, and fragmented families.

MONTSERRAT

The service was spiritual awakening for those of us who have made the decision to follow Christ. We were inspired to invite people suffering from substance abuse or unemployment to see how good the Lord is and feast on his grace. Jesus is still in the business of healing, restoring and changing lives for God's Kingdom. So, when the pressures of life bear down on our families, economy and society, we need to call out in prayer for the healing of our lands. We were also reminded of Ephesians 6:18 which tells us to "pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." It is expected of us that whatever assistance can be made to help improve the livelihood of others we should provide it. People today are turning hope into despair but God will always be there to offer salvation for us all.

ST. LUCIA

Our service was organized by a twelve member committee hosted by the Wesleyan Holiness. The service was very successful and we had several denominations



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

participating. Five schools held the children's program and we were happy to get the children involved. The atmosphere was very joyous as we had also just celebrated our 40th independence day. The theme and Bible story delivered an appropriate and meaningful message. It challenged us to remember that in life anything can be justified but not everything is just, fair, and worthy in the eyes of God. We must take care of the priorities of God before anything else turns the direction of our lives on another direction.

SURINAME

Preparations for our celebration were delayed, but despite this, we were blessed to have each service well attended and exciting. Preparations started with Bible study sessions in which we learned that the Lord is calling and inviting us all to the Kingdom of God as we are, as we were created. We



ST. LUCIA

followed the Slovenia service closely so as to feel connected with our sisters. Decorations were based on the colors of the Slovenian flag, carnations were distributed to participants, and national dishes were prepared to share after the service as refreshments. We sang the theme song "Celebration" during our service and one of our songwriters was able to translate it into our native language, Sranan.

Website:
<https://wgdsuriname.wixsite.com/wgdsuriname>
 Facebook: World Day of Prayer Suriname

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

With joy, excitement, and humility, we are grateful that through the stories of the women of Slovenia our women will therefore become involved in "Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action." We held a special prayer to intercede on behalf of the women in Tobago who are suffering through domestic violence and other forms of abuse, the elderly who are alone and lonely, and other social challenges that we are facing. One young person commented on how she was really touched by the liturgy. Others were able to connect with the women of Slovenia, through the Slovenian dress in which the women around the table were attired. At the conclusion of the service each person was served a bowl of warm



beef soup, a traditional Slovenian recipe. Also, in a labor of love, one of our committee members made more than 100 crepe paper carnations to distribute to each participant.

TURKS & CAICOS

We are a group of small islands separated by the sea and a scattered population. It is difficult to travel between the islands and get together, but the World Day of Prayer celebration unites us every year in spirit. There are individual services on our three main islands. The service is always met with great anticipation and enthusiasm. Our women look forward to preparing for the celebration and learning about a new country. This is

the only time during the year when our women can come together in agreement and prayerful unity. The atmosphere radiates of spiritual blessings and cooperation. Each church enjoys participating and sharing in prayers.

USA

One of the primary reasons women across the USA enjoy participating in the World Day of Prayer is the opportunity to learn about a new country and connect with other women. Many women expressed pleasure in learning about Slovenian culture directly from Slovenian natives who were asked to share stories of their home country at several worship services. Food is an essential

part of connecting the community so participants really enjoyed cooking traditional Slovenian dishes and serving them after the service. Despite a rash of bad weather that affected many parts of the USA, hundreds of services were held in almost every state. Thousands attended the services held all weekend. Many churches integrated the Slovenia service with their regular Sunday service, opening it up to more people and families. As a form of prayerful action many women held food and clothing drives to highlight the needs of their communities.

Website: www.wdp-usa.org

Facebook: World Day of Prayer USA

The service is always met with great anticipation and enthusiasm. Our women look forward to preparing for the celebration and learning about a new country.

Latin America



ARGENTINA

Every year we see WDP expanding in our country. The services are well attended and positively received. We followed the program as our Slovenian sisters outlined. The music was our strongest component this year. The songs were easy to learn and we were able to translate the text and sing them during worship. This truly kept us connected with our sisters.

We believe the power behind our growth across the country is our annual preparatory retreats. These retreats allow women from different regions to gain the knowledge and tools they need to bring WDP to their communities. We see the formation of women leaders and we are happy to see the fruits of our labors blossom. As for the national committee, we meet every month and hold a prayer session for the peace of the world. This strengthens our bond and unites us as one under Christ.



Website: <http://cedmo.blogspot.com/>
Facebook: DMO Argentina

BRAZIL

We had a very pleasant, cheerful and blessed worship service, where brothers and sisters of various denominations worshiped God in the same spirit. The women of Slovenia made their call - "Come - Everything Is Ready" and we accepted the invitation. They presented us with a small and young country, but rich in natural beauty and enthusiastic, happy people. We gave voice to those women, who shared their lives with us, their moments in the light and in the

shadows. The theme brought us a great challenge: God invites us to the feast! We cannot and should not ignore it! It is our mission to invite, pray, and announce the word of God where we live. The reflection has enriched us spiritually, created an opportunity for the affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, and an opportunity to expand our knowledge about the world.

Website: <http://www.dmoracao.comunidades.net/>

CHILE

The different Christian denominations that are a part of our committee - Methodists, Lutherans, the Salvation Army, and others - all held a service - a total of 19 services with hundreds of participants. Members are not always able to participate because the service is held during a weekday but our brothers and sisters still felt united, and those present were motivated to pray for the neighbors



they may never meet. Some congregations also got children to participate in this time of prayer during Sunday school. The Bible study that was included in the program was developed during the week in other Church activities with a group of young women and adults. In preparing and carrying out the program, the women set out to make the walnut potica recipe. Many congregations prepared a table and invited everyone to pour themselves a coffee or tea accompanied by potica. God bless Slovenia!

Website: <https://diamundialdeoracion.wixsite.com/chile>

COSTA RICA

We are thankful for the women who write and shape the WDP program. It motivates us to know about other realities and to use the lessons to motivate our churches into action. The Slovenian women inspired us to acknowledge all the good things we have and take notice of the things we need to fight for in our countries. Women of different denominations and cities sitting together around the table allowed us to feel like we have all been invited to the banquet of the Kingdom of God, without distinguishing who is who. People who have never celebrated with us before were



able to feel comfortable and part of the community. A new church decided to host the service and for the first time they saw how uplifting being in solidarity with the world by praying could be. The warm and welcoming atmosphere made the celebration very special.

CUBA

The celebration was exceptionally special because of the visit of Tanja Povsnar, Chairperson of WDP Slovenia, and her family to Cuba. They shared their experiences based on the theme reflection and talked about the Slovenian culture, dances, and music. Through this exchange, the Cuban women were able to reaffirm our confidence that the prayers have faces and that behind every text or song, there is a very strong reality that connects us all. The theme summons a

table where there is room for all and this has a particular connotation in the Cuban context. It is not always easy to get enough food or supplies, but hospitality is still one of the shining qualities that characterize us. The story of preparing a banquet and inviting everyone, including the poor and the marginalized, taught us to insist on being an inclusive church, open to the world and to the neediest.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

We congratulate the WDP committee for developing an inspiring program. It was a blessing and we thoroughly enjoyed the theme. It spoke to us about the rush to invite to the banquet not those who have more, but those who have less. The banquet represents the Kingdom, which by the word of God motivates a



change according to what Jesus wants in our minds and through our actions. This is the only way to take the step towards the grace of God. This step is a radical change. Our response can be given in terms of a new relationship with our neighbors. In this relationship care and mutual acceptance reflect the love of God, where there is no place for discrimination. We all receive the grace of God without deserving it. There is no place for an attitude of pride, insinuating that another is less valuable than us.

EL SALVADOR

Our community is not an established National Committee but with the support of an organization like CEDEPCA, we have been able to meet regularly and properly prepare for the WDP program dedicated to Slovenia. For us it is a matter of commitment, of obedience, and of finding open spaces of acceptance. With this theme we discovered the importance of being attentive to the call of God. Jesus prepares everything for his guests, we just need to be obedient to the call, to integration, to community participation, to value all human beings and discover their gifts and talents. The reactions after the service were very positive! Many recognized the ability of



women to mobilize the people of their community, as well as the importance of informed prayer to maintain the link we have with God. It is because of this connection that we can act wisely.

GUATEMALA

The program motivated us to celebrate with people who are different and who we may have overlooked in the past. We felt that the artwork really illustrated what the theme meant - that the poor, the disabled, and the lame are beloved children of God. A table must be prepared for them and we should extend our invitations to them. This is true solidarity. It forces us to leave our comfort

zone, get to know different people, and learn about their different needs. We celebrated this year with the Ranm Ixqui Association (Heart of Women). We mostly enjoyed the songs and the sharing in small groups about the questions placed by the Bible Study. We thank our sisters in Slovenia for preparing this service that has shown us the importance of inclusiveness and openness.

HONDURAS

For the first time ever we held a separate children's service from the one for the adults in La Esperanza, Intibucá. The bees theme from the Children's program inspired a lot of creativity such as bee name tags, bee costumes, snacks made from honey, and a cork bee for each child to take home. The adult celebration was held in honor of one of our dearly beloved committee members, Dilcia Mazier, who passed away in January. We felt her presence in many ways and concluded the service reading the Padre Nuestro Ecológico, an environmental focused version of the Lord's Prayer. Jesus' parable of the banquet urges us to invite everyone, which can be viewed as a call to ecumenism. Our biggest challenge is that in our country the Catholic and Evangelical polarization is deeply felt.



MEXICO



PANAMA

We hope that our people can embrace and value ecumenism with ongoing collaborations.

MEXICO

Participating in the worship service motivates and renews our commitment to keep in mind the women of each country. Through these celebrations we learn about specific situations affecting women, men and children. We feel united by the sadness, worries, difficulties, joy, hope, and the yearnings of how to be better and more committed to God and compassionate towards others. Our mission is to share the word of God and help the needy.

The service was easily developed and everyone involved enjoyed it. Activities were prepared on time, costumes were made for the leaders, a recipe of potica was made and shared with attendees, and carnations were distributed at the end of the service. We prayed for the women of Slovenia, for the injustices committed daily against women worldwide, and for those who have lost their way from Christ. We pray God continues to shine over us and throughout creation.

NICARAGUA

We felt that the program written by the sisters of Slovenia was prepared with great delicacy, creativity, and love. We adjusted the service for our context but kept the spirit of Slovenia with us. We studied the bible text together, prayed for our sisters around the world, and concluded with a celebration around the table while singing and sharing with each other. Tables were set up with different types of bread, fruits, wine, and water. We had 12 more churches participate in the service this year compared to last year, reaching a total of 19 different services. We have informed ourselves about Slovenia and we have prayed for the women and families of this nation. We have also been greatly motivated to make this global movement known to other associations, denominations, and churches.

PANAMA

Every year the program is developed in such a way that it touches on the



NICARAGUA

difficult situations of people of all ages, ethnicities, and members of different denominations. The themes and Bible stories always reflect and impact the lives of our community. In some ways, we can always see a piece of us in the worship service and we pray not only for our sisters but for all of us. WDP motivates us to keep healthy ecumenical relationships and we continuously invite women of all ages to join the movement so that they can contribute their experiences to the work we do. We try to live out the WDP motto of "Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action" daily by praying and working on meeting the needs in our community. We must continue to help and act in ways that will strengthen this movement for the future.



PARAGUAY

Every year we host a retreat for women so they can come together and feel motivated to strengthen our faith and our bond as WDP sisters. The program challenges us to remain united among ourselves within the country and also around the world, praying and being attentive to needs that arise. Surrounded by peaceful forests, the retreat's workshops prepare the participants for the various aspects of the program such as traditional food recipes, WDP history, art and crafts, and worship service leadership. The daily morning devotions, Bible studies, and recreational moments enrich our ecumenical relationships. Our collaborative teamwork for the celebration helps us discover and enhance the talents God gave to each of us. The chosen Bible text was very challenging and relevant for our current realities. We found the concept of getting together around a table and being invited to share in the feast very interesting.



URUGUAY

We were gratified to share with the women in our community that we are all invited to a banquet and that everything was indeed ready! No matter our race, social or economic situation, or church, we are all invited because in God's eyes we are equal. We need to be prepared to include in our communities those who think in a different way. Jesus' message is to respect and love our neighbors. Thus, we intentionally reflected on our relationship with God and our communities. The service was prepared as our Slovenian sisters suggested. The church was decorated in the colors of the Slovenian flag and the table was prepared with bread and grape juice. We used red

flowers as a symbol of the invitation and handed one to each of the participants. It is such a blessing to be a part of this movement!

VENEZUELA

Our country is currently in the middle of a crisis and so this program served as a testament to our faith as we did not know if holding a celebration was even possible. We were only able to hold two organizational meetings, but it did not limit us to hold our celebration at the end of the month. It was a very special moment of sharing. The theme was very relevant to the reality of many countries facing social, political, and economic hardships. The people of Slovenia showed us that they have fought and continue to fight to eradicate many injustices that affect the development and empowerment of women, girls, boys, adolescents, and finally the general population. We committed ourselves to be just as strong. We committed ourselves to visit each church and promote WDP. We pledged to help the needy whenever possible with love and compassion.

Middle East



EGYPT

To most Egyptians the country of Slovenia was mostly unknown. This enriching worship service introduced our participants to the people of Slovenia, their culture, traditions, history, etc. and allowed us the opportunity to pray for and with them. As we prayed, we realized that some of the needs and issues the Slovenian women highlighted are also shared by our people.

During our local service, the map of Slovenia was projected on the wall while presenting the background information. The Bible study was helpful in reflecting on the theme and considering how we are all invited to God's table. Children donned traditional Slovenian dresses

and played games during their scheduled program. The service was enjoyed by many! We have also been strengthening ecumenical relationships and providing a time following the service where participants can mingle over refreshments and create fellowships.

Website: <https://www.bethlehem-manuel.com/wdp.html>

LEBANON

Learning what the older generation endured in Slovenia, how they managed to keep their Christian faith and instill it in their children, stirred many emotions in us. In the Middle East, where Christian communities are constantly threatened, we were encouraged by the strength

of faith of Slovenian people in spite of the hardships. In our country, we have seen an unparalleled influx of refugees over the last ten years. It has been good to be reminded that the Lebanese were once the refugees during a civil war that ravaged our country. Now we are the ones who have been asked to welcome others with open hearts. We loved the worship service and the feeling of togetherness with all the different churches who gathered around the table. As a National Committee, it was a true joy to receive the news about the different services that were celebrated around the country.

Facebook: World Day of Prayer National Committee of Lebanon

As we prayed, we realized that some of the needs and issues the Slovenian women highlighted are also shared by our people.



The worship service itself was able to reveal honestly, clearly and bravely the various problems Slovenian women of diverse ages, children, and families face in the different levels of society.



time at one of our services, we had 11 women participate in reading and leading the program. The children's program was prepared as a separate activity. We found it very interesting and full of educational tools. The worship service itself was able to reveal honestly, clearly and bravely the various problems Slovenian women of diverse ages, children, and families face in the different levels of society. We deeply thank the Slovenian committee for preparing a great program. God bless them and bless the whole world who prayed in one spirit on the World Day of Prayer.

PALESTINE

The parable reminds us that we are all created as equals and Jesus invites us to work according to God's will. This is a strong message to the women in Palestine who may often experience despair and feel like giving up the long struggle of doing God's will. Services were held in various locations but bad weather caused a lot of difficulties. Despite this, we had enjoyable services and we sensed a growing interest to share with sisters from around the world, especially now that Palestine women will write the service in 2024. We decorated our space invoking the spirit of Slovenia and

distributed red carnations to the participants. For the first time in many years, a Catholic theology student presented an inspiring reflection on the Bible story. In the Bethlehem region, Inger Jonasson, Chairperson of WDP Sweden, presented in-depth information about the WDP movement at the service.

SYRIA

The parable of the feast was a challenging and thought provoking text for us to study and try to apply to our local context. Every year we find it interesting to listen to the voices of the women from the writer country. For the first

TUNISIA

We prepared and organized a trilingual service for our local community and distributed materials for those who could not join us but wanted to participate remotely. We were fortunate to have a group of young people from the



St George's Anglican Church, who did the readings in Arabic and led the music. We were also joined by a group of Egyptian school nuns who were attending our WDP service for the very first time! It was lovely to have this 'new blood' supporting this opportunity and sharing our journey of prayers with the Slovenian women. As we are a small community we do not hold any formal activities other than the WDP ecumenical service however, the shared interest creates a bond that keeps us in touch throughout the year.

TURKEY

For the very first time our local worship service was hosted in the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan church, the most important church of Christian denomination in Istanbul, and attended by the patriarchal vicar of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Yusuf Çetin. Within the churches of the Eastern Rites, women are not usually involved in the services or liturgies nor do they hold leadership roles. They are often singing in the choir or teaching the children. Because of that,

it was very important for our community to have the WDP service at this church. The service was led by our Chairperson and she motivated the women present to participate actively in church services and join the WDP movement of "Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action." Everyone was impressed with the theme and felt as though they had been invited to follow more faithfully in God.

Everyone was impressed with the theme and felt as though they had been invited to follow more faithfully in God.

Pacific



AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

We really enjoyed learning about Slovenia and felt privileged to be among the first in the world to start the celebration and pray with and for them. The thought of thousands uniting around the world in prayer is always at the front of our minds as we eagerly prepare for the service. In our region, people from 30 different denominations came together and prayed. The theme of a celebratory meal was warmly embraced with tables set up in churches with imaginative arrangements of carnations and rosemary. Many groups used Slovenian recipes and shared meals after the service. Other groups made cards and bookmarks that participants could keep as a memento.

On March 15th, Christchurch was shocked by a shooting attack on two Mosques. A great outpouring of love, sympathy and prayerful support came from all over. The power of prayer means more to us now than ever.

Website: <http://www.worlddayofprayer.co.nz/>

AUSTRALIA

The theme expressed with the table central to their services struck a chord with many groups. There was a consensus in how interesting and informative the Slovenian material was. There was also recognition of how some of the issues highlighted in the written service were common to our own country. At one venue, 75 students and teachers from a local primary school provided a dramatized version of the Gospel message. School choirs and students from Christian colleges participated at other venues as well. An increasing number of church groups held afternoon services, combined with sausage sizzles to motivate younger people's participation to the prayer event. The affection for World Day of Prayer across Australia is apparent in the reports and it is encouraging to note both the interest and

The thought of thousands uniting around the world in prayer is always at the front of our minds as we eagerly prepare for the service.

enthusiasm for learning about other countries around the world, finding a commonality in their needs and lifting them up in prayer.

Website: <https://www.worlddayofprayer-australia.org/>

COOK ISLANDS

The theme made us aware of our attitudes towards one another. It was effective and powerfully relevant to raise the question—Are we ready to open our hearts to all, no matter their situation?



The answer is clear—we are not to leave anyone behind or uninvited. Our worship service focused on young girls living with disabilities. A table was set for them by the altar beautifully decorated with Slovenian colors. They were our guests of honor. For most of them, this was their first time being a part of the WDP celebration. The service really opened our eyes to those that have been overlooked in our communities.

Our celebration coincided with International Women’s Day, which was celebrated the day after. Our committee was given the opportunity to share the message on behalf of WDP to the government ministries, private sectors, and church groups represented at the event.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

For us, World Day of Prayer has become an important event for women to share and learn while united in the same spirit. When we come together we all leave our

church doctrines at the door and focus on the worship service and the writer country. This year we had the opportunity to learn about Slovenia, a place we have never been to before. It was a big joy to join them in prayer and reflect on the theme which aroused a great deal of passion among all of us. Through the service we learned about the lives of the women in Slovenia, the challenges they face, and how similar they are to our own, and we had the experience of being connected in the world God created.

NAURU

Our island is very small but there are still many differences among us and the various denominations, so it is sometimes difficult to get people together. The celebration is very important to us because it serves as a space to interact and worship ecumenically. As a group, we read through the service and tried to relate our own local contexts to the situations brought to light. Even though we are

culturally and geographically distant from Slovenia, we are women with the same needs, pains, and burdens. The service was set up in the mainland church with a banquet table displaying elements of Slovenia. Each of the Slovenian women was represented by a member of a different church in the processional as they entered and sat at the table. The music created a peaceful and spiritual atmosphere. One of the most enjoyable highlights was the introduction of the potica cake!

SAMOA

The celebration always awakens a lot of enthusiasm and spiritual strength in our people. Throughout the service we could feel the lively energy of our women and our sisters in Slovenia. It was a vivid prayer. An ecumenical service was held and broadcasted live on the radio for those at work to follow along. The theme was very stimulating and the parable was dramatized by a group of women.

Through the service we learned about the lives of the women in Slovenia, the challenges they face, and how similar they are to our own, and we had the experience of being connected in the world God created.



On the altar, we placed a bottle of wine, salt, and a bowl of cards picturing Jesus with open hands inviting all to God's kingdom. These cards were given out to participants after the service. As we read through the service we felt the emotions reflected in the women's stories. We prayed, not only for the women in Slovenia but for women in every corner of the world, to empower them to carry on the message of the Master's Feast.

VANUATU

Our committee was very excited to unite in prayer with our Slovenian sisters. The annual program is so important for understanding of other countries. We learned so much about their country and realized that although we pray for common concerns, we are very different. For example, Vanuatu has experienced a different kind of internal conflict and we are grateful for this! Services were held across the islands and everyone had a

different experience hearing the voices of our sisters. Organizing the celebration gave us a new perspective leading up to 2021, when our committee is responsible for writing the service and sharing our voice with the world. It has prepared us for the future as we develop a stronger National Committee. WDP can be a blessing to the community and influence to address its social needs. WDP is actually bigger than just a celebration one day a year.

Leading Together

“A Story to Tell, a Call to Act”

BY EMMANUELLE BAUER AND SENKA SESTAK PETERLIN



Around 75 women coming from 28 European countries gathered together at the Conference Centre ‘de Werelt’, in Lunteren, Netherlands from June, 12-18, 2019. Surrounded by forest, the space was ideal for meditation, friendship and prayers with World Day of Prayers (WDP) leaders during the conference, which was hosted by the Netherlands Committee.

What better way to start the conference than to tell the story of World Day of Prayer? Helga Hiller, a former liaison from the Germany Committee, presented the history of the movement and how she researched it using primary sources. Since WDP’s roots are in the missionary movement in the XIX century, passing by the important ecumenical conferences, to the history of the European Conferences, we were delighted with her presentation.

Though the different workshops focused on actions in the context of the Netherlands or WDP practices, the participants shared their own experiences and learned something new to bring back home.

There were two very interesting Bible studies presented in a new way. The first Bible study was based on Luke 13: 10-17, “Jesus heals a crippled woman.” Rebecca Onderstal and Riëtte Beurmanjer invited us to tell the story by moving our bodies, expressing our feelings, and

demonstrating the interaction of the crippled woman and Jesus. To finalize the presentation, we were invited to make our bodies represent the message of the story. The second Bible study, was based on the main story for the Zimbabwe celebration “Rise, take your mat and walk.” (John 5:1-9) Ulrike Bechmann took the participants on an interesting journey through the text of John. We all got a new perspective for the story and how we could present it for the Zimbabwe celebration.

WDPIC chairperson, Laurence Gangloff, and the executive director, Rosângela Oliveira, led a morning group conversation connecting the conference theme - “A story to tell, a call to act”—with the WDP Guiding Principles. It was very interesting for first time participants and young women to reflect based on the Principles. Even long-time WDP leaders discovered



Sterk als de dood is de liefde
(Hooglied 8, 6)

Verslagen en vol ongeloof
hebben wij kennis genomen
van het onverwachte
overlijden van

Annelies Bouwman

Wij wensen haar familie
en ieder die haar lief was
Gods nabijheid toe.



something new in the Principles and felt inspired to tell their stories and what calls them to act.

Though the different workshops focused on actions in the context of the Netherlands or WDP practices, the participants shared their own experiences and learned something new to bring back home. WDPIC European representatives, Emmanuelle Bauer and Senka Sestak Peterlin, led the encounter between the praying partners in Europe. It was a moment to build new friendships and to

promise to continue this partnership through various actions over the year. The evenings were reserved for fellowship so we laughed, danced and sang together, while the Prayer Walk in small groups created a chance to learn more about each other.

The 11th European Conference was a success as it gathered women together, created the opportunity for new friendships and strengthened old friendships. We told our WDP stories, and were called to act. We left this intense week feeling full

of hope, expectations, motivation and empowered.

We are thankful to the Netherlands Committee for organizing the conference. It gave us a chance to learn about the country and interact with local communities and projects. A word of honor goes to Annelies Bouwman, who participated at the conference and passed away days after the event. May God comfort the WDP Committee and her family. Thank you, Annelies.

The 11th European Conference was a success as it gathered women together, created the opportunity for new friendships and strengthened old friendships. We told our WDP stories, and were called to act.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland Writer Workshop

BY WDP EWNI COMMITTEE



It begins with the World Day of Prayer International Meeting. In 2017, the working group to select the theme and countries, assigned England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) the service for March 2022, focusing on the theme “I Know the Plan I Have for You.”

“We have our theme. Can we get started? Not quite.” Although the Committee received the theme in 2017, it was more than a year before the first writing workshop was held. The intervening time was spent recruiting volunteers from a wide range of ages, backgrounds, skills, denominations and ethnicities. We wanted to have a really diverse group to represent our broad context of life.

In November 2018, 33 women ranging in age from 23 to 84 years, ordained and lay, and representing at least 8 denominations, turned up for the residential workshop held in Hothorpe Hall, Leicestershire. Professions were varied – from Barrister to Puppeteer. From the International Committee, to assist and guide,

came Rosângela Oliveira, Executive Director and Laurence Gangloff, Chairperson.

So many ardent women, committed and eager to begin, are a force to be reckoned with but before the different writing groups got under way, there was a session of introductions and reflection. Laurence and Rosângela wanted to ensure that we fully understood the significance of the text and that there would be unity in the product of the different groups (Worship Service, Bible Study, Children’s Materials, Country Background) as well as in the art work and music. And then the real work began.

How do you explain in just a few words that Britain is not ‘England’, that the Republic of Ireland is not in the UK but Northern Ireland is, and that Scotland is in the UK – but not part of this National Committee. And that is just for starters.

At times discussions were lively – accommodating different priorities and views

is not easy – but at the end of the weekend, four groups had begun to produce drafts. The process did not end there: the groups continued to work together, face to face and electronically.

Rev. Sophie Schuil-Brewer, who is involved in the group writing the service material, said: “I was struck by how different we all were and the immense breadth of experiences that we brought with us. In our conversations and interactions I could see the unity of the body of Christ, there seemed such a good connection between us all. Putting services together with a group can bring up tensions but my experience with WDP has shown each of us really listening to one another, truly celebrating our differences and working so hard to make sure all voices are heard.”

*Longer version of the article published in *Together in Prayer*, Issue 37.

Around the Table

BY ROSÂNGELA S. OLIVEIRA

We missed two of our sisters at the table set for the World Day of Prayer International Executive Committee (WDPIC–EC). They were unable to obtain a visa to the USA, despite their compliance with the requirements. They did not refuse the invitation, like the guests in the text of Luke 14:15-24; but the door was closed on them. We were made aware of the impact of political tensions in our world at our table, and we strongly re-affirm our hope in prayers: “Come—Everything Is Ready.”

After being elected at the International Meeting in Brazil in 2017, the members of WDPIC–EC met in Ossining, New York from July 28th to August 3rd, 2019. This is the only face-to-face meeting until they reunite a few days before the International Meeting in 2022. However, a series of web conferences were held since January to engage the committee members in knowing each other and preparing the meeting.

The responsibilities of the Executive Committee members include calling for the next meeting of the International



WDPIC Executive Committee

Committee, ensure the production of WDP materials, budget revision, implementation of recommendations and to be in communication with the National/Regional Committees (WDPIC

Constitution). All those aspects were explored at the NY meeting.

The morning prayers contemplated the WDP Zimbabwe theme “Rise! Take your mat and walk.” On each day, one perspective, one emphasis, or one experience was shared towards the complete overview of the Bible story, and the celebration of the worship service. The offering collected at the Executive Committee service was dedicated to the Zimbabwe committee.

MAPPING OUT WDP

The week started with mapping out the concerns and dreams perceived in the World Day of Prayer (WDP) movement. Laurence Gangloff, Chairperson, lifted up the concern for WDP focus countries living under political tension. She dreams of WDP preparing peacemakers for those communities, and of the worship service bringing hope into the world.

On behalf of the Africa region, Joyce Larko spoke about the context of civil unrest and natural disasters, migration and human trafficking, health crisis and poverty. However, she said, “Leadership is the key to changing this context. A



Young women at the WDP 2017 International Meeting.



SNC 2017 workshop, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador

good leader prepares new leadership to take on the challenges.” Africa dreams of building a strong generation of young women to hold up the mantle of WDP. Moumita Biswas and Vino Schubert shared concerns for some WDP Committees in Asia that are dysfunctional. The political context of the region has increased violence against women and created obstacles to access information. They dream of facilitating access to WDP materials, promoting campaigns like Thursday in Black and nurturing children and youth into the future of WDP.

From the Caribbean and North America region, Ruth Phillips and Lauren Wilks were concerned about the aging WDP leadership and the perspective that limits the WDP program to one single worship service. They dream of new intergenerational initiatives like prayer walks, social justice actions and connecting with the writer countries’ context. In Europe, Emmanuelle Bauer and Senka Sestak Peterlin talked about how to engage WDP groups in a yearlong program for prayer. It would involve promoting prayer partnerships, and expanding the

use of social media to educate and campaign on WDP’s themes.

From Latin America, Rebeca Cascante and Susana Renner commented on the context of social violence and climate change. However, there was an increase of understanding and participation in WDP after the Strengthening National Committees Workshops in Central America. They dream of initiatives that create cultural exchange and capacity building of WDP leaders. On behalf of the Middle East, Maral Haidostian reflected on the situation of the region where political conflict turns women and children into the most vulnerable. They dream that WDP can contribute prayerfully and creatively to make a positive difference in the world. For the Pacific region, Vicki Marney and Henrica Marona were concerned about the aging committees and dream of WDP being led ecumenically by young women in advocating through prayer and action on social and environmental issues.

By mapping out WDP in the regions, we pointed out some critical issues in the movement like dysfunctional leadership,

fixed ideas and rigid practices, lack of intergenerational leadership, difficulties accessing new technologies, a decrease in financial resources, repetitive worship service styles and an imbalance between prayer and action initiatives. Those points were taken into consideration in the planning conversation. However, it was also recognized that WDP brings to the world a space for intergenerational participation, prayer as an exercise of listening and acting, awareness on social issues and advocacy for peace, environmental care, women’s rights and a life free of violence.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

The functions of the International Committee are carried out by the Executive Director, Rosângela Oliveira, who reports to the Executive Committee (WDPIC Constitution). A report was introduced with a review of the WDPIC Constitution to highlight the purpose and structure of WDP, and laying out responsibilities. Also discussed was the administration of the international coordination based on the relationship with the worldwide



June 12-19, 2022 · Edinburgh, Scotland
World Day of Prayer International Committee

network and the management of the financial resources. The program activities were described based on the cycle of the writer committees which implies capacity building and theme preparation for the written resources.

The treasurer, Susan Jackson-Dowd, presented the Financial Statement and Accountant's Report. The revenue and expenses were revised and accepted by the members. The revenue of \$239,534 represented the total received as Annual Contribution, Grant and Funds Contribution, and Investment Income from March 2018 to February 2019. The actual expenses for this period were \$246,937. The expenses are classified in program and supporting services. The program expenses represented \$188,592 while the supporting services were \$58,345. In response to the service and as a gesture of "Prayerful Action", some WDP committees sent their offering to the writer country through World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). The offering for the Suriname program totaled \$17,223, which was donated to WDP Suriname, to support the local partnership developed.

In the analysis of the Annual Contribution received, it was pointed out that there is a decrease in the amount of funds and National Committees that contributed. We recognized the meaningful effort of those who give in the midst of their harsh life conditions like war or poverty. However, there is also concern about the lack of understanding of the purpose of the offering in WDP. In the spirit of the Guiding Principle that says "Sharing acknowledges that all have something to give and receive", WDPIC encourages the National/Regional committees to participate at the international coordination through the giving of its Annual Contribution. Since the 2003 Quadrennial Meeting, the Annual Contribution recommended is 5% or beyond of the offering collected. Additional to the Annual Contribution, any committee is invited to contribute to the Personnel and Office Fund, Strengthening National Committee Fund, Travel Fund, and Writer Country Fund.

LET US MEET AGAIN IN 2022

Introducing the plans for the next International Committee Meeting in 2022, Laurence Gangloff presented a historical retrospective, starting with the roots of

the movement in the 19th century and concluding with the 2017 meeting in Brazil. After refreshing the memories and experiences in Brazil, the planning started with small group conversations to define the theme. Then, a review of the elements of the program that account for the responsibility of the International Committee and capacity building of the movement.

The Executive Committee confirmed the invitation of WDP Scotland to hold the International Meeting on June 12 to 19, 2022, in Edinburgh. The theme chosen comes from Ephesians, which is the book suggested for the Taiwan (2023) and Palestine (2024) services. The theme of the International Meeting is "New Heart, New Mind. Called to Hope", (Ephesians 1, 18). A logo to promote the event was created as a gift from the Presbyterian Women (PC-USA) to WDPIC.

The financial resources to hold the International Meeting comes primarily from the contribution of each and all WDP National/Regional Committees. It is a joint effort to bring together representatives of the various committees who are engaged in the World Day of Prayer. This is an

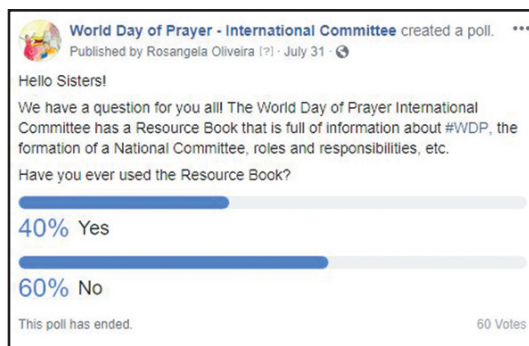
expected activity and each committee is encouraged to make plans for their participation ahead of time. The plan should include raising and saving money to send the delegates. How about saving £1 a day from now until 2022? That's not all! Plan to involve young women in the national committee leadership so she can be elected to represent the committee, increase the organizational capacity of the committee, engage in the study of the themes and annual promotion of the program, and be in communication with WDPIC office and your regional representative.

LOOKING FORWARD THE NEXT 100 YEARS

Envisioning WDP in the future, we realized that the year of 2027 will be a landmark for the movement. If you have the timeline poster you can look for the first year of the united prayer. It was 1927 under the theme Pray Ye Therefore, prepared by Mary Hough, USA. We can count 100 years of uninterrupted prayers and action led ecumenically by women. It started in the USA, it was joined by women in Canada, and then spread across the world. It is a landmark! The celebration will start at the International Meeting in 2022 and conclude at the following International Meeting in 2027. The planning is in the early stages. WDPIC welcomes your suggestions.

WE HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU ALL!

“WDPIC has a Resource Book that is full of information about WDP, the formation of National Committee, roles and responsibilities. Have you ever used the Resource Book?”



This question was posted on the WDPIC Facebook on July 31 during the conversation about the Resource Book at the Executive Committee meeting. Out of the 60 votes received, including the votes of the Executive Committee, 40% said yes, and 60% said no. It is an impressive response! The Resource Book was prepared by Eileen King and Helga Hiller. It is available for download on the WDPIC website and has been widely distributed (<https://worlddayofprayer.net/organizational-steps.html>). WDPIC has started a review of the Resource Book to continue making it a valuable organizing tool for WDP.

“BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION”

This is the theme for WDP Vanuatu 2021. Vicki Marney, Pacific regional representative, presented the context of the country before the reading of the current draft of the worship service by the Executive Committee members. It was a moment of prayer with our sisters in Vanuatu, and also the final phase of the review dialogue with the Vanuatu Committee.

MOVING ALONG GROUNDED IN THE CYCLE OF THEMES AND WRITERS

After lifting up concerns and dreams for WDP, sharing together the meals and

the daily prayers, the Executive Committee concluded the week with a draft plan of activities up to 2022, when new leadership will be elected in Scotland. WDPIC's plan is set by the cycle of themes and writer committees selected up to 2026. The theme preparation usually has two steps: a Strengthening National Committee workshop and the Writer Committee Preparation workshop. Those workshops will be held with the committees selected up to 2026. We may experiment with new technologies such as web conferences or webinars focused on the WDP movement and annual program. If you want to contribute to this initiative, please communicate with the WDPIC office.

The regional representatives planned to organize Strengthening National Committee workshops in countries where the committees need support in order to reorganize or to train new leaders for WDP. They will encourage the participation of young women in WDP through their communications to the region and in preparation of the International Meeting in 2022.

At the closing, Henrica Marona, from the Pacific commented on how her eyes have been opened and her understanding of WDP around the world has grown beyond what she knows in the Cook Islands—“WDP is about connecting and becoming linked to each other as one.” No wonder the song “Bind us together” reflected in poetry our experience!

WDP at a Glance



World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome all to join in prayer and action for peace and justice especially on every first Friday of March.

The 2019 Journal is based on the 100 reports out of the 146 countries that received the WDPIC worship service materials. The celebrations were held in churches, schools, hospitals, prisons, convents, and elderly homes. In a few countries, the worship service was broadcasted on national TV, radio, and via livestreams. WDP activities were announced in the cities or church's newspapers, posters, fliers, Facebook, website, and Twitter. Around 17 activities, especially for children and youth, were reportedly held in many schools and churches across the seven regions.

HOW WILL WDP OFFERING MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SLOVENIA AND AROUND THE WORLD?

"Through the WDP offering women share their resources with women and children around the world." (WDP Guiding Principles) WDP Slovenia will reach out to young women and young mothers to build new WDP leadership. And support women's groups focused on empowerment and spiritual growth.

The National/Regional Committees reported that this year's offering will be given to their local community and abroad for the following purposes:



Empower women, widows, indigenous women, children, migrant children, Roma girls, youth, and people with disabilities through education, mentoring, shelter, food programs, orphanage assistance and prison visitations;



Support people displaced by war or natural/human made disasters, fund training for disaster preparedness, attend the needs of refugee people;



Provide mental health care for people living with HIV and AIDS, breast cancer survivors, children with autism, girls at risk, the homeless, victims of domestic violence and human trafficking;



Promote Christian education for children and youth, women's ministries, women's theological formation, ecumenical women's desks and Bible Society initiatives;



Sustain WDP in local communities, partner with the writer country, contribute to the regional and international coordination of the movement and strengthen national/regional committees. Promote the WDP story by honoring a leader through the Fund for Tomorrow.

WDP 1927–2026

THEME TIMELINE



The WDPIC Timeline poster showcases 99 years of World Day of Prayer history. From 1927 to 2026, the poster displays the themes and writer countries which have motivated our prayers and actions.

Hanging this poster on your wall to promote WDP is a great way to start traveling around the world. The poster is an educational tool to talk about the issues that we have raised awareness and advocated for over generations. It also demonstrates where in the world women are leading this ecumenical movement.

Besides that, we incorporated expressions of WDP within the seven regions we are organized: Africa, Asia, Caribbean and North America, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and Pacific. You can invite the children and youth to match the photos with the theme and the region.

There are two ways that you can order the poster. You can order a printed copy from the WDPIC office (email—admin@worlddayofprayer.net) or you can order the art design and print the poster in your country.

The prices are:

1 to 10 printed posters = \$ 6.50 each poster plus shipping;

11 to 99 printed posters = \$ 5.50 each poster plus shipping;

Over 100 printed posters = \$ 4.50 each poster plus shipping;

Digital Art Design = \$100

EDITORIAL TEAM

Executive Committee Members

The WDP Journal is an annual publication of the World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). It is based on the Annual Reports written by the WDP National/Regional Committees. It offers an overview of the global movement from its local context, and includes expressions of prayer and action based on the annual theme. WDPIC promotes the sharing of information, therefore the Journal can be freely downloaded from the WDPIC website, and it can be reproduced provided acknowledgment is given to the source of information. All photos were originally sent from WDP Committees with the understanding that they might be published.

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Vicki Marney, Australia (Vice President)
Henrica Nio Marona, Cook Islands



June 12-19, 2022 · Edinburgh, Scotland
World Day of Prayer International Committee

Let us Meet Again in 2022!

Come ready to:

- Listen to the Word of God and to one another in sharing prayers and actions of hope
- Build community among WDP leaders in your region and around the world
- Participate in elections for the Executive Committee, future themes and writer countries
- Launch the 100 years of uninterrupted prayers celebration – 1927 – 2027

To prepare for the WDP International Committee Meeting:

- Save the date
- Raise funds for your committee's participation
- Involve young women to represent your committee
- Be in communication with the WDPIC office and your regional representative.

Venga preparada para:

- Escuchar la Palabra de Dios y una a las otras compartiendo oraciones y acciones de esperanza
- Construir una comunidad entre líderes del DMO en su región y con el mundo todo
- Participar de las elecciones para el Comité Ejecutivo, los futuros temas y países escritores
- Promover la celebración de los 100 años ininterrumpidos de oraciones - 1927 - 2027

Para prepararse para la Reunión del Comité Internacional del Día Mundial de Oración:

- Guarde la fecha en su calendario
- Recauda fondos para la participación de su comité
- Incluya a mujeres jóvenes que puedan ser seleccionadas para representar su comité
- Mantenga contacto con la oficina de CIDMO y con su representante regional.

Préparez-vous à:

- Écouter la Parole de Dieu et s'écouter les unes les autres en partageant des prières et des actions d'espérance.
- Rencontrer et vivre des temps forts avec les responsables de la JMP de votre région et du monde entier.
- Participer aux élections du Comité exécutif, aux choix des futurs thèmes et pays rédacteurs
- Inaugurer le lancement de la célébration des 100 ans de prières ininterrompues : 1927 - 2027

Pour préparer la rencontre internationale de la Journée Mondiale de Prière:

- Enregistrez la date dans vos agendas
- Collectez des fonds pour la participation des délégués de votre comité
- Impliquez des jeunes femmes pour représenter votre comité
- Entrez en relation avec le bureau de la JMP Internationale et votre déléguée régionale.

ZIMBABWE

“Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk”

March 6th, 2020

The WDP 2020 program is based on Jesus' encounter with a person who, although positioned for healing, had not acted upon the opportunities given (John 5:2-9a). Jesus asked—“Do you want to be made well?” You are faced with this life-changing question. What are you going to do? Use this opportunity to reflect with your WDP group, community and ecumenical partners. Prayer and action are what links us together around the globe.

The country of Zimbabwe continues its search for peace during its political transition. The change in government, that occurred when the WDP materials were written, continues to bring Zimbabwe to the frontlines of the media. The economy crashed the dreams of many, Mugabe died at 95 years old, protests are met with violence, and a massive cyclone has flooded some communities.

However in all moments, WDP women, churches and ecumenical organizations have not lost hope.

“Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk,” said Jesus. Our sisters from Zimbabwe are taking Jesus' encounter to be a call to act in love for peace and reconciliation. “The action verbs suggest that we should not be afraid to act on the word of God. God is offering us the steps for personal and social transformation.” This is the time for change!

May we hear the words of this compassionate God and the Prince of Peace to act upon the healing of ourselves and our communities to bring peace and reconciliation into the world.



VANUATU

“Build on a Strong Foundation”

March 5th, 2021

One of the first things we learn with Vanuatu women is that “Land to a Ni-Vanuatu is what a mother is to a baby.” The relationship with land is at the foundation of the Ni-Vanuatu identity and spiritual strength. The photo chosen to illustrate the program reflects the Vanuatu's women connection with land, culture and faith.

We listen to their voices through the worship service, which invites us to focus on the Bible story in Matthew 7:24-27. Jesus tells a story about the kingdom of heaven using the image of a house and the land on which the house is built. Choosing the land on which to build the house is an important decision for people in Vanuatu. The combination of considering the terrain and the climate is crucial in a tropical archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean prone to earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions and rising sea levels.

In Jesus' story, the wisdom of the builder of the house comes from hearing and acting on the word of God, which is a word of love. This is the foundation on which our sisters call us to build our homes, our nations and the world. A call of faith to be earnestly considered when responding to the prayer of commitment: “What is the house that you would build?”

The Vanuatu sisters praise God for fertile land, the sweet melody of the birds and for the sound of children. All of them together reflect their way of life and their everyday struggles with production of food, care for the environment and the education of children. Those challenges are reasons to praise God for being the source of their strength while they pursue opportunities in education, keep children away from malnutrition and provide alternatives to young people. In receiving their voice as a gift of wisdom, we share their hope and creatively engage our communities in “Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action.”



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www.worlddayofprayer.net