

# IAWN news

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Photo: Fran Bawayan, IAWN Provincial Link for the Anglican Church in the Philippines

The month of March brings with it Women's World Day of Prayer (known in some countries simply as World Day of Prayer), International Women's Day and the annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Anglican women and men have been taking part in all these events and this newsletter gives a flavour of some of the activities that have been going on to promote the gifts, well-being and equal God-given dignity of women and girls.

We have much to celebrate, with more women bishops, and an archbishop too, added to our church leadership.

And we have much to lift to God in sorrow, with earthquakes, severe weather events, drought, and new or continuing conflict taking their toll in many of our countries.

## All God's Creation is Very Good!

This year's theme and materials for Women's World Day of Prayer on Friday 2 March were prepared by the women of Suriname. They drew out attention to the urgent need to care for creation and commit ourselves – and our churches – to radically greener living. About 90 per cent of the population in Suriname live in low-lying areas on the Atlantic coast, which are likely to be seriously affected by rising sea levels caused by global warming.

### A prayer for International Women's Day, 8 March, and for any day of the year

Thank you to Fran Bawayan, IAWN Provincial Link for the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, who has shared this prayer which she dedicates "to all women here and there, far and near, down under and up there..."

Loving and Caring God,  
You call us to be bearers of the Good News to the world.

Make us. Move us. Gather us in your arms.  
Let us rise together in one accord celebrating the wholeness and fullness of our womanhood with the rest in a just, loving, peaceful and abundant world:

the promise of shalom!  
Continue to lead us, Triune God,  
as you bless each one of us,  
with another blissful year and  
with your inexorable love for all. AMEN

Anglicans took part in ecumenical services all over the world. In Toronto, Canada, a service was hosted by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. During her sermon, Beth Lorimer, ecological justice program co-ordinator for the ecumenical social justice group KAIROS Canada, said "When we break harmony with creation, we, too, break harmony with the Creator.

"Living a life that is mindful of creation and that seeks not to over-consume what the Creator has given us ... will reaffirm our interconnectedness and bring us into closer relationship with God."

In the Philippines, Ecumenical Church Women and women from other members of the National Council of Churches held a Service at Faith Baptist Church in Quezon City, and

Worship leaders at St Martin's Church in Bergvleit, Cape Town, South Africa dressed in the local costumes of the multi-ethnic women of Suriname.

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# News from Around the Communion

*Continued from front page...*

IAWN member Geraldine Fiagoy let us know that in Baguio City, the Episcopal Church Women of the Episcopal Diocese of North Central Philippines hosted an ecumenical service at the Episcopal Cathedral of the Resurrection joined by women from the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Many there also dressed in apparel similar to that worn by the peoples of Suriname. After the Service, noodles and cassava were offered – typical Surinamese fare.

IAWN member Gill Curry reported that the ecumenical service planned for Maidenhead and for other towns and villages in England had to be postponed because of unprecedented snowfall and freezing temperatures. But praying together at any time is good and we send our best wishes as services are re-scheduled.

All Services everywhere for the World Day of Prayer were a celebration both of unity and of God's Creation, and sent out an urgent call to all of us to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

## Girls' Friendly Society includes boys in campaign against gender-based violence



*Photo GFS South Africa: Young South African men and women from the Girls' Friendly Society and Boy's Friendly Society wear orange as part of their campaign against gender-based violence.*

The Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) is an international Anglican movement with a presence in many Provinces around the Communion. In South Africa a Boys' group has been set up, and young women and men are together learning to tackle gender-based violence.

The Johannesburg-based World President of GFS, Thembeke Pama, said "We cannot fight gender-based violence if we do not raise boys with the values of respecting girls and raise them together".

GFS South Africa has worked with the country's Commission for Gender Equality and Gift of the Givers to create an education programme which was launched in February during a workshop at the Church of Christ the King in Sophia Town, Johannesburg. Young people from different dioceses in the South African province of Gauteng took part. The workshop aimed to empower young people and help them to understand the meaning of gender and gender-based violence. The programme will now be rolled out in all dioceses in South Africa.

## 'Day Zero': When the waters run dry



*Revd Dr Rachel Mash. Photo: Green Anglicans*

In a reflection for Lent, the environmental coordinator for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Revd Dr Rachel Mash, considered the continuing drought in Cape Town.

She looked towards the anticipated 'Day Zero', when most households will have no running water and nearly four million citizens will need to queue to fetch their daily ration of 25 litres.

'Day Zero' has long been the reality for many people who live in informal settlements and rural communities. Rachel's reflection considers water injustice in a world where 2.5 billion people queue for dirty water or carry water for miles from the nearest river, and finds resonance in the biblical story of Ishmael and Isaac, where Ishmael was thrown out with his mother Hagar to die in the desert with only one skin of water, while Isaac had water to drink, and bathe and play in. Read Rachel's reflection in full at <http://bit.ly/2tuuU5i>.

Our sister network, the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, has a web page dedicated to resources for Lent at <http://bit.ly/2DiC8il>.

## Women DARE!



*CSI Moderator Thomas K Oommen at the opening of the Women Dare outlet at the Church's Synod Centre headquarters in Chennai. Photo CSI.*

Following successful skills training and entrepreneurship development, the Church of South India has opened an outlet in its Chennai-based headquarters to sell products produced by hundreds of Dalit and Adivasi Rural Entrepreneurs (Dare) women's groups across south India.

It is hoped that the Women Dare initiative will lead to the establishment of similar outlets in all CSI dioceses.

Have you joined our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IntAngWomen?>

Our thoughts and prayers are with all Anglican women who have travelled to New York for the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) where the priority theme will be 'Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls'.

Delegations from the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church and the Mothers' Union, and other Anglicans with a faithful passion for gender justice, will be able to observe proceedings at the UN headquarters (read more here: <http://bit.ly/2oWOPuv>), visit their government's permanent missions at the UN, and attend as speakers and participants in a raft of side and parallel events organised by governmental and non-government groups, including faith-based organisations.

Anglicans will be leading a special event on 'Climate Change: Perspectives of Women of Faith' hosted by St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Park Avenue featuring a panel of speakers from around the Communion, with concluding remarks from Her Excellency Penelope Beckles, UN Ambassador of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. (All welcome if you are in New York, 15 March, 6.30pm).

### Women meet the Oceania Primates at 'Fono' in Fiji

Thank you to IAWN Steering Group member Archdeacon Carole Hughes for sending this photo from the Women's Meeting in Suva Fiji at the home of Archbishop Winston and the Revd Sue Halapua.

The women met with the Archbishop of Canterbury who was in Fiji for the Pacific Primates' Fono (meeting).

A major topic of discussion at the Fono was climate change, which is having a wide-ranging impact on the region, with rising sea-levels endangering the small islands, more frequent severe weather events, and acidification of seawater which affects fisheries and aquaculture.



### More women bishops!

IAWN members have been sharing the good news of the election or consecration of women bishops.

In the Anglican Church of Canada, Susan Bell has been elected as the Diocese of Niagara's first woman bishop.

Anne Dyer has become Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney – the first woman bishop consecrated in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

She said "I hope people will see me, first and foremost, as a committed Christian who wants to do the best in improving the lives of many. However, everything I do is shaped and informed by my life experience as a woman."

The Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil also has its first woman bishop. Marinez Bassotto has been elected Bishop of the Diocese of Amazon.

Sarah Mullally, already a suffragan bishop, has been appointed as Bishop of the Diocese of London in the Church of England.

Kay Goldsworthy (photo below) has been enthroned as Archbishop of Perth in the Anglican Church of Australia.

May God bless all these women in their new ministries and all those among whom they will serve.

We are getting a little closer to that day when we will just talk about 'bishops' instead of 'bishops' and 'female bishops'.



# More News from Around the Communion

## Violence normal in a relationship?

The House of Sarah in the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia held a Women in Faith workshop in Suva, Fiji, where those taking part shared their stories and experiences of violence against women and girls.

They recognised that women and girls tend to think that this is normal in their relationship, or they experience misplaced shame that keeps them from sharing what is happening.



Participants identified the need for women and girls to be educated in order to be able to report on violence against them. Read more at: <http://bit.ly/2Dgl1hH>.

## Sexual & Gender-based Violence Community Dialogue

In January, HOPE Africa (the social development programme of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa) facilitated a Sexual and Gender-based Violence Community Dialogue at Holy Cross Anglican Church in Nyanga, South Africa.



The participants had an opportunity to share their personal experiences of sexual and gender-based violence and explore ways forward.

## Prayer and fasting for peace

On 23 February, Christians of many traditions kept a day of prayer and fasting for peace in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where social-political tension, violence and suffering continue.

In the DRC, 4.3 million people are displaced throughout the country and 13.1 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance throughout the country this year.

In South Sudan, 2 million people have fled the young nation as refugees and about 1.9 million people are internally

displaced. Children, women and young men have been most affected. Millions of women and girls are exposed to gender-based violence in these crisis-affected areas.

Let's keep praying.

'And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.'  
*Colossians 3:15*

## Choose Life

IAWN Steering Group member Moumita Biswas let us know that in February, the Diocesan Women's Fellowship for Christian Service in the Diocese of North East India, in partnership with Women Concerns Ministry of National Council of Churches in India, organized an ecumenical consultation on women as catalysts of change. Women leaders from different church traditions in the North Eastern Part of India attended the consultation which drew from the of Women's World Day of Prayer and was entitled 'All God's Creation is Very Good: So Now Choose Life, Change Ways and Actions'.

The 60 participants discussed climate change and ecological degradation and its impact on women, and how climate change has resulted in accelerating the process of migration and human trafficking. They looked strategically at how Women's Fellowship groups and churches could play a role in creating awareness and transforming lifestyles, and shared stories about how Indigenous women in the region are trying hard to heal relationship with mother earth through their sustainable, eco-friendly life-styles and farming practices. They protect bio diversity by preserving and sharing seeds, work for food security, and pass on indigenous technology from one generation to another .

## New resources

**Freedom Sunday:** In this video, the Revd Rachel Carnegie of the Anglican Alliance introduces their global focus on anti-slavery initiatives this Freedom Year <http://bit.ly/2FmLHz0>.

See also a dedicated website for Freedom Year with multi-lingual resources including a monthly calendar to help us find out more about human trafficking and modern slavery, pray for change, and take action to end it: <http://bit.ly/2G30ONw>

**Understanding Violence Against Women - Myths and Realities:** Wherever you are in the world, this on-line eight-week course is an opportunity for cost-free distance learning with the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK.

The course is for anyone interested in challenging violence against women; you don't need any prior experience of the topic. Information <http://bit.ly/2tnokUm>.

Send your news and photos to our Newsletter editor  
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