

MACEDONIA UNIT

Report about Women's Work in Macedonia 2018! ! ! Macedonia is not a wealthy country, but it is rich in beauty, cultural heritage and history.! It is impossible to imagine the United Methodist Church in Macedonia without the dedication of the Bible Women and women missionaries: real pioneers of Protestantism in the Balkans, who 150 years ago spread the Gospel, teaching women and children, establishing basic school systems, leaving behind seeds of love and hope upon which the congregations in this area are built.!

SEP:

In almost all the congregations there are local women groups who play an important role in the life of the church in Macedonia. But, unfortunately, an increasing number of young, smart and well-educated women and families are leaving the country to search for a better future elsewhere. ! ! Often elderly, sick and helpless people, among them a lot of women, are left behind in their homes without any prospect of being taken care of in nursing homes, because such facilities are either too expensive, or in some areas, not existent. That is a huge challenge for the Methodist church in Macedonia, as well as for the women's work, since the women are also asked to take social action in their community. ! ! The highlights of the women's work are leadership training seminars and spiritual growth retreats for women at Lake Ohrid; these take place once a year and are a good opportunity for strengthening the relationships among the women within the church. Last fall, for the first time, these two events were combined into one event for about 50 women. Our aim is to involve young women, too. It was a big success last year and we will continue to combine both events. ! ! Our Women's Magazine "Charizma" is meant as a resource for women's meetings and as a tool to help spread the Gospel. It is issued four times a year. ! ! World Day of Prayer helps us to be open to other traditions and confessions. Living as a small minority in an Orthodox country, it is not always easy to stay focused on the aim of WDP, but nevertheless we enjoy worshiping together and living beyond confessional and national limitations. ! ! As a member of the WFMW since 1957 we are glad to be a part of the worldwide Methodist Women and as the theme for this area seminar says, to be "Chosen people, called to proclaim". We take courage and inspiration from the women who have gone before us and try to be witnesses in a world full of pain and misery - not only with our words, but with loving actions for a change to the better. ! ! !

Christina Cekov!