

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES



NEWSLETTER

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JOURNALING Illustrating your faith journey

Clair Sanches-Schutte - Women's
Ministries Director

I must admit it was not easy for me to concentrate when doing Bible Study. I found it rather boring. It was not easy to focus, and it was something I did not look forward to but found it was a must as a Christian. I do not know why I had not done Bible Journaling before because I had always written journals. Prayer journals, journals for everyday events, journals about my holidays. So, it was not as if I had not journaled before.

Then the hype around Bible Journaling came and I was sold immediately. I bought myself a journaling Bible and I love it. Bible Study is no longer a must but something I really look forward to. I want to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and as I feel Him with me as I study the Word, I cannot explain the feeling that this gives me. I feel very close to God. And that has been a huge blessing to me.

Now I realize that Bible journaling or journaling is not for everyone. So please do not think I am telling you this is the way you must go. What is important is that you find your way of connecting with God so that your relationship with Him will grow stronger every day.

In Joshua 4:1-7 we read about the twelve stones which were placed as a sign. Verses 6 and 7: "In the future, when your children ask you 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

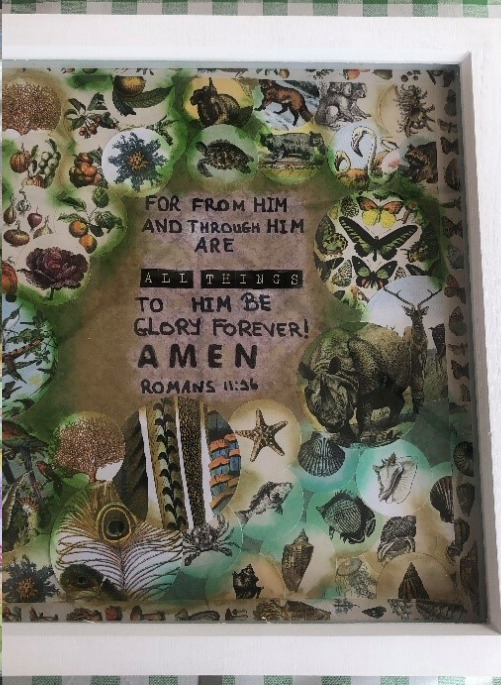
This is how I feel when journaling my faith. It is a sign between me and God. It is something very personal but at the same time something I share with those I love. Because you start feeling so close to God you want to share those experiences with friends and family.

Journaling makes me want to grow in faith. It stretches my faith. It opens my eyes to Bible sections and texts I had not fully let sink in.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF JOURNALING

For me, because I love to journal, I have found several ways to journal. Simply because we all go through different moments in time. We all have times when we are on a high and times when something happens, and we are off keel for a while.

Let me explain. A while back I became rather ill. I had a massive infection and did not feel well at all. My Bible study was non-existent because I just could not concentrate. But I wanted that connection with God. So, I did the only thing I could at the time. I wrote out a text every day. Coloured something I thought fit with the text and that was it. It was still a connection and I was grateful for that.



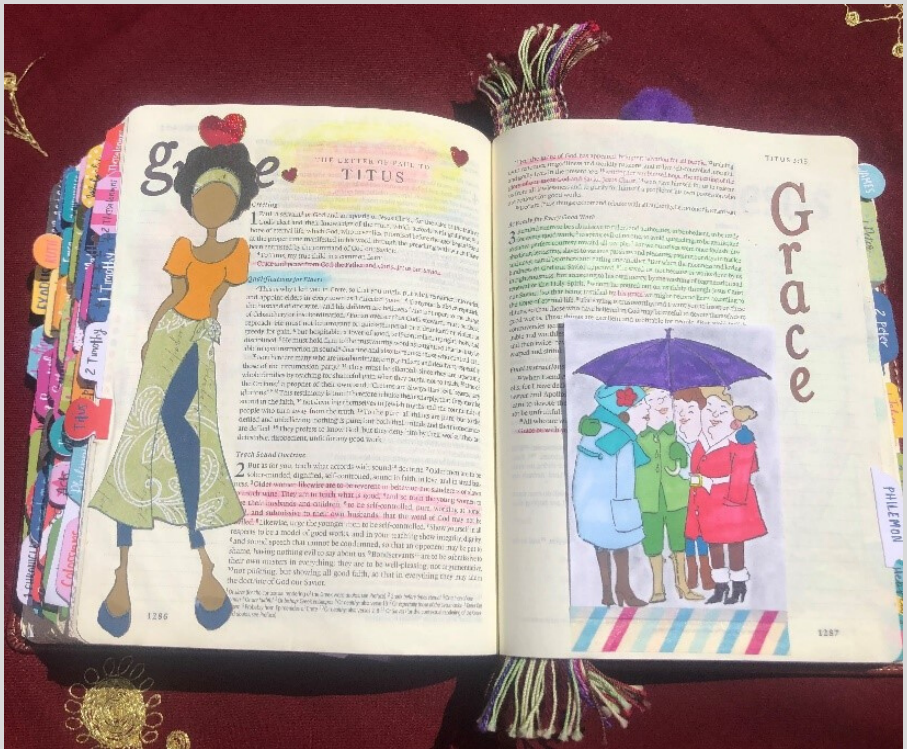
Another time I felt very stressed and the only thing I could do was colour. We all know that colouring relieves stress and has many other benefits as well. So, I had a 'Women in the Bible and Me' Colouring book and Bible study and did that.



There is some journaling I do with my son. We make works of "art". I have put the word art in brackets because I cannot draw at all. But it is another way of expression towards God.



I love illustrating Bible passages and texts that speak to me. Think of Joshua 24:15: "... as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."



As you can see it is not professional. God knows my heart and sees me for who I am. Not a perfect person I can tell you. But he loves me anyway and feeling close to him has been such a blessing. And finally, my Journaling Bible. This has been the greatest blessing of all. This is where I really immerse myself in God's Word. Making it come alive for me. Letting it sink in and making me think about what I have read.



Whatever you do, however you do it, find a way to connect with God. The immense blessing you get from growing a relationship with Him is so worth it. May God's Word come alive for each of you.

General Conference Women's Ministries

Introduces you to the Adventist Learning Community (ALC) <https://www.adventistlearningcommunity.com> an initiative of the North American Division (NAD). Their mission is to empower lay members, local leaders, professionals, men and women with the skills necessary to further the kingdom of Christ with passion in the 21st century.

We recommend this site to you with its various resources.

1. The Adventist Learning Community offers a wide selection of free online continuing education (CE) and ministry training courses and resources, all of which are available to Seventh-day Adventist teachers, education administrators, pastors, and chaplains.
2. There are several courses housed on the ALC that provide the option of university academic credit. These courses list the Adventist university(ies) where credit can be obtained.
3. The ALC provides a platform that allows teachers to work toward their professional goals with the added benefit of learning at their own pace, and the flexibility of adapting professional development to their own schedules and unique needs.

Here are some of the courses the ALC offers specifically designed for Adventist teachers from a distinctly Adventist perspective:

COURSES

There are currently five courses valid for NAD teacher certification or re-certification available for Continuing Education Credit (CEUs). These courses can be easily identified by the Adventist Education logo and "Teacher Certification" label on the homepage of the course. These five courses include:

Adventist Church History—Tell the World (1 CEU)

Bible Doctrines (1 CEU)

Health Principles—Light for Living (2 CEUs)

Philosophy of Adventist Education (1.5 CEUs)

Spirit of Prophecy (2 CEUs)

One of the courses that we found very helpful as we think about enditnow is the one **SEXUAL ABUSE: RECLAIMING HOPE** (see below). For more information go to <https://www.adventistlearningcommunity.com/courses/sexual-abuse-reclaiming-hope>



<https://www.adventistlearningcommunity.com/courses/sexual-abuse-reclaiming-hope>

Course Summary

The purpose of the 6-module course is to explore multiple aspects of sexual abuse including awareness, prevention, recognition, protection, investigation, advocacy, responsibilities, organizational supports, healing, and structural approaches to stem the tide of unfortunate and criminal activities within the Seventh-day Adventist faith community. Unfortunately, abuse, harassment, and misconduct happen. Much of this takes place with our most vulnerable faith community members, our children, and young adults. As a church organization, we are taking a stand to stop sexual abuse. There are many things that can be done to limit or stop these types of incidents in your faith community. But the first step is talking about it.

What do I need to know?

After completing this course you will earn 1 CEU and a certificate of completion in your Adventist Learning Community e-portfolio. After completing this course for continuing education credit, you may re-enroll in the course for the purposes of resource retrieval, but not earn any additional CEUs.

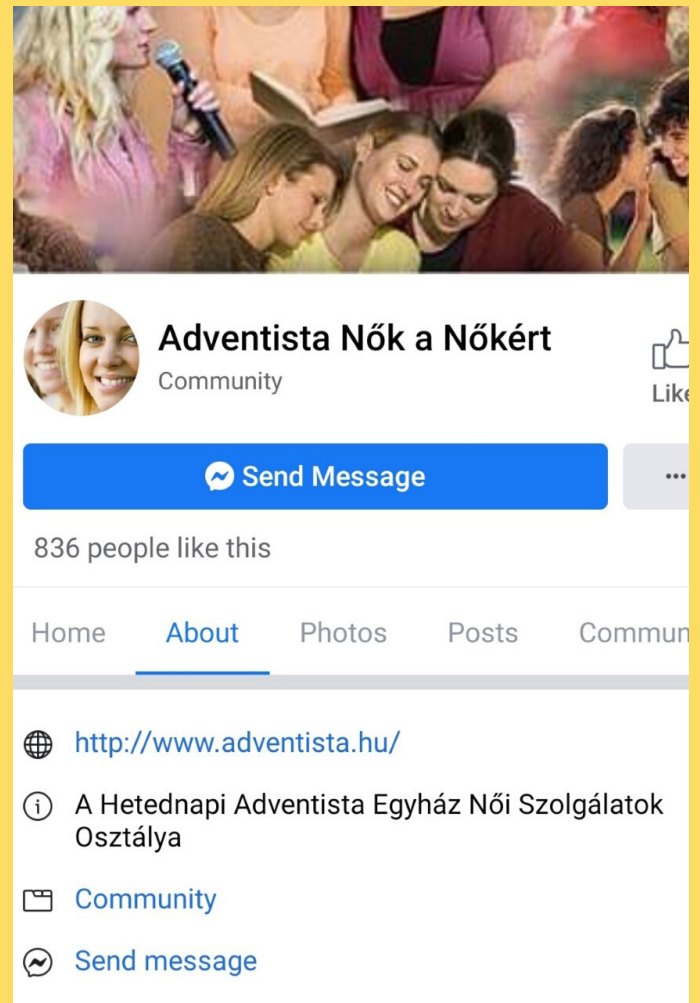
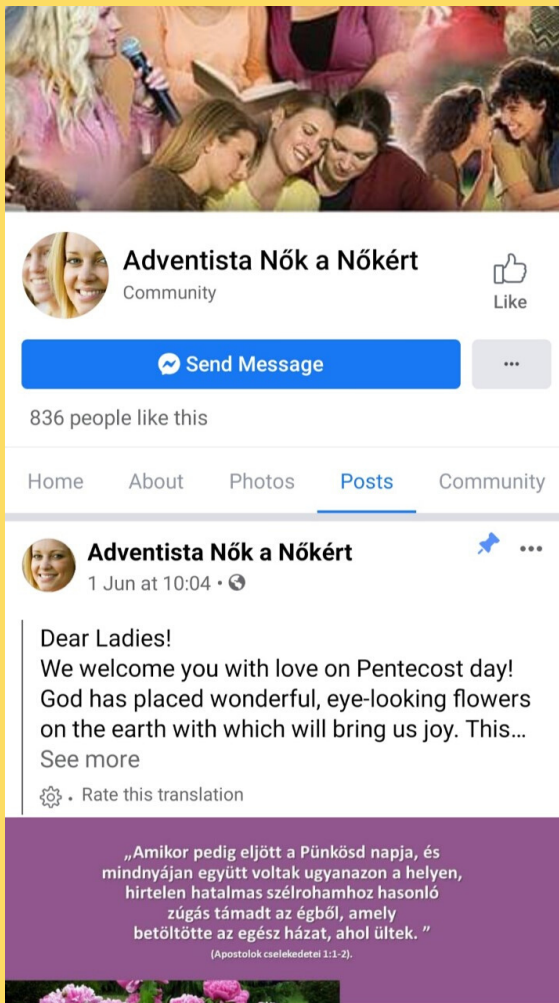
What will I learn in this course?

You will learn vital components of dealing with harassment and sexual abuse and discover empowering approaches to curb this type of behavior in your faith community. In addition, you will discover remediation and healing strategies to reclaim hope for sexual abuse victims and their faith communities. This course provides an extensive library of relevant resources in every module.

About the Instructor

Grace Mackintosh is Legal Counsel and Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. She has worked as legal counsel with Miller Thomson LLP in Calgary, Alberta representing clients with respect to constitutional, government, and human rights law. Grace also served at the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission for three years where she developed human rights policy and made public presentations on behalf of the Commission. She has been involved in several religious freedom public awareness projects addressing national and international issues. Grace has 3 lovely daughters and lives in Lindsay, Ontario.

Women's Ministries Facebook Hungary



Women's Ministries Facebook page in Hungary keeping in touch with women in there community.



International Women's Day of Prayer Sweden

WITH HEATHER DAWN SMALL - GENERAL CONFERENCE WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

As for the rest of the world, the events of this spring have caught Sweden, our churches, and our personal lives off guard and put us in a place we've never been before and we have a hard time navigating.

Things started off quite normal with plans for the whole year – both on a national and on local levels, and I am very happy that we could have this year's first highlight for Women's Ministries (maybe even the last on a national level) in the very last hour before the pandemic hit us. For the international Women's Day of Prayer we had the joy of receiving Heather Dawn Small's first visit to Sweden. This was a weekend of pure joy and blessings from above. Women from the different churches and groups in Stockholm have put in a lot of planning, time, work and most of all love, to make the meetings from Friday night to Saturday evening special for everyone who came.

Is there any better way of celebrating the "International Women's Day of Prayer" than with a visit of our Women's Ministries Director Heather-Dawn Small? The women from the churches in Stockholm had been planning and anticipating – and finally the 6th of March 2020 was here – welcoming Heather-Dawn Small on her first visit to Sweden. After some mingling Heather-Dawn started out the weekend by giving a good overview about the mission of Women's Ministries, what it is all about and how the pillars Nurture, Uplift and Outreach are needed among women everywhere, even in 21st century Sweden. Equally important she disarmed some of the myths people spread about Women's Ministries – things it is not. At this point, I wished the whole congregation had been there – not just the women already engaged or interested in Women's Ministries. We closed the evening with an inspirational devotional.

Heather-Dawn shared practical advice on how to form a bible study routine and stick to it, finding your own time, your own spot and your own way of studying the word of God and connection to the LORD. Sabbath morning came – and with it an excited buzz of the active women all dressed in bright turquoise T-shirts and Women's Ministries scarves. Since there had been first cases of people infected with the Corona virus in Stockholm the women tried to avoid close body contact, having a hard time not to hug everybody coming for the church service. Heather-Dawn Small had prepared a special „Mission Spotlight“ for the Sabbath school showing examples of Women's Ministries activities around the globe. What a beautiful colorful picture of women, contributing to God's work with their gifts and within their cultural context.

The church service started with the women marching in, singing “We are women of faith”, building a choir of young and old and different language and culture groups united in worship. The women lead through a colorful church service with a special prayer time, childrens story with pig “Christina” (which in Swedish can be a word game – “Gris-Stina”, meaning “pig Stina”), and special music with the women’s choir which was formed especially for this weekend. Heather-Dawn asked in her sermon each and everyone the somewhat disturbing question “How do you smell?” – which aroma do you spread around you? Connecting to the key verse in 2 Cor 2:14-15.

After a delicious Ghanaian lunch the different women groups lead us through a time of praise and worship after which every woman was invited to a time of personal prayer going through prayer stations.

We gathered again for Heather-Dawn’s devotional “My time with God.” After that, we switched our focus to the future - opening up for questions and thoughts that have formed during the weekend, focusing on how we can put what we have learned into action. This session was led by Sonja Kalmbach, the WM director of the Swedish union, and by Clair Sanches-Schutte, the WM leader of the Trans-european Division. We closed this wonderful weekend with an agape meal.

Women’s meeting online

And then the pandemic hit us. Two weeks after the wonderful weekender with Heather Dawn Small almost all churches in Sweden were closed and most activities put to a halt. There was no official lockdown in Sweden, but bigger gatherings are not allowed and high-risk people are asked to socially distance themselves. We, like everybody else, met this whole situation quite unprepared. It took a couple of weeks until we came up with at least one

possibility offering relief to loneliness and giving women a chance to be part of something. Since the beginning of April we hold an online women’s meeting every week. One hour of prayer, Bible study and the possibility to talk about big and small things.

We still try to get more women involved in the online meeting – for many taking the step into an online meeting is a really big one. But the ones who dare (and are able to fix the technical stuff!) get richly blessed. This might even be something to hold on to even after Corona, considering the fact that not every church has active women’s groups

Warm greetings from Sweden – stay safe, stay blessed!

Sonja Kalmbach
Women’s Ministries Director, Sweden



OUTREACH

COVID-19 RESPONSE – SERVING THE COMMUNITY

BY SHARON PLATT-MCDONALD

“Thank you so much for caring for us! We really appreciate the tasty hot meals you provide us each day. It has kept us going!”

These comments came from a lady whose family are the recipients of an outreach project God led me to create for individuals and families recovering from the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

As people recover from the virus, I noticed that a significant number are encountering ongoing challenges. For example, several individuals have reported that they continue to experience breathing difficulties and significant fatigue. Some are reporting that they are feeling very flat and low in mood and even quite depressed. Others have reported that the ongoing fatigue is such that they are unable to adequately care for themselves.

On April 15th 2020, a New Scientist article carried the headlines – ‘Could the Coronavirus trigger post-viral fatigue syndromes?’

It states: “Conditions like chronic fatigue syndrome have been linked to viral infections, so it’s possible that the covid-19 virus may go on to trigger similar conditions.”

“Thank you so much for caring for us! We really appreciate the tasty hot meals you provide us each day. It has kept us going!”

This article certainly resonated with the reports I was receiving. As such, God led me to launch a Convalescence Project called 'RESTORATION' which seeks to meet the wholistic needs of individuals recovering from the COVID-19 Coronavirus. This is being run by funding from my BUC Health Ministries department and resources from my other 2 departments - Women's Ministries and Adventist Community Services.

The 'Restoration' Convalescence project under the subheading - 'Revive, Renew, Restore', is being rolled out in 3 phases and will provide the following:

- Daily freshly cooked meals
- Weekly shopping
- Relevant publications on physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- Counselling support
- Financial assistance for a limited number of people to enable them to convalesce away from home where necessary

We are working in partnership with an outreach ministry group called 'One Vision' an initiative of Enoch Kanagaraj, from the Stanborough Park Church, to deliver some of the operational segments of our BUC Convalescence Project. They assist us in providing the hot meals and we are currently delivering around 230 meals per day to the community.

Each week we get positive feedback from people of all cultural and faith groups and those with no religious beliefs. Many have stated that once our churches reopen, they would like

to visit. We are so grateful to God for the opportunity to reach out to others during this pandemic.

There is much that we can do on a practical level to bring relief to the suffering. Our churches may be closed for our regular services, but we can still be of service to the community. Please pray for the BUC 'Restoration' Convalescence project, as we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our communities, in this time of need.

Sharon Platt-McDonald - BUC Director for Women's Ministries, Health Ministries & Adventist Community Services

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24632783-400-could-the-coronavirus-trigger-post-viral-fatigue-syndromes/>





Reminder! Women's Ministries Emphasis Day on June 13, 2020

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day is on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Calendar of Days and Events and falls on the second Sabbath each June. It is an opportunity for women to lead out in a worship service and a chance to educate the church regarding the purposes of Women's Ministries. It is an ideal time to introduce your leaders and committee to the church family and to invite women who have not been involved to join.



Children's Ministries Director: Clair Sanches-Schutte
Edited by: Caroline Fuller
Childrens Ministries, PA

Trans-european Division
119 St Peter's St, St Albans, AL1 3EY, England

If you would like to add an article or advertise your ministry in our monthly Newsletter please email:
cfuller@ted.adventist.org