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**PRAYER**

Educating, encouraging and equipping women to  
pray, listen, learn, grow and give.

*Join us in praying for Europe*

**MARCH & APRIL 2023**



# Building Biblical Community



Dear friends,

For the months of March and April, we are praying for ministry of TWR Women of Hope in Europe. This region, like all regions, is vast, and each country faces their own unique circumstances and challenges. However, there is a common theme throughout the articles and prayer requests: the hope and joy of Christ which comes through being in community with others.

As we reflect on this, may it remind us of the early Church. Acts 2:44-47 tells us *“And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”* In the same way that the early church gathered together and supported one another, we see

this same thing happening across Europe through the ministry of TWR Women of Hope.

But not only do we see this across Europe, it holds true for us in Canada as well. Each one of us has the opportunity to support one another in community. Have you been a part of a community that does this well? Sometimes it looks like providing meals to a family who is suffering, or helping someone move. Sometimes it looks like sitting with someone in their grief and sorrow, and at other times, it looks like rejoicing with them in celebration. Sometimes we are the giver of care and support, and other times we are the receiver.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reminds us that we are stronger together, like a three strand cord. When we come together in community, supporting and caring for one another, we find strength, and see God at work through those relationships.

While it may not always feel comfortable to be the giver or the receiver, may you take up the challenge to look for ways to build biblical community and be the both the giver and receiver of support and care.

Together in prayer,

The TWR Canada Women's  
Ministry Team

## MARCH

1. Lord, we praise you that our Albanian team is working with a domestic-abuse shelter, Lighthouse Albania, and are serving women by providing after-school programs for their children and helping with the cost of rent. (James 2:15-16)
2. God, please guide the TWR Women of Hope team in Croatia to find a studio in which they can produce their programs, which are currently completed in a private home. (Phil. 4:19)
3. Lord, may the many lonely people in Denmark find Jesus as their Saviour and friend. Please send believers to encourage them. (John 15:15)
4. Heavenly Father, we pray for wisdom, strength and encouragement for the three translators of the TWR Women of Hope prayer calendar in the Faroe Islands. (James 1:5)
5. Father, provide a way of escape and holistic healing to women in Finland who suffer physical and mental abuse in their relationships. (Ps. 18:48)
6. Lord, please provide the German TWR Women of Hope team with creativity in organizing and promoting more online prayer gatherings. (Matt. 18:20)
7. Father, please provide a sister who has a heart to communicate with and minister to the Muslim women in the North Caucasus using Scripture. (1 Pet. 4:10)
8. God, we pray for a translator for the 2-minute audio devotional series that the TWR Women of Hope team in Norway desires to send to its partners. (Matt. 6:33)



# From the Hearts of Those Across the Region

9. Father, give real solutions to Poland's lawmakers to create a social system that cares for orphans and the homeless. (Prov. 2:6)
10. God, we pray for the end of dating violence in Portugal, for victims to report the abuse and for tough punishment to be carried out against offenders. (Ps. 10:14)



11. Lord, please help teenage girls in Romania resist the temptation to start a sexual life before marriage, risking pregnancy when they aren't ready for it. (Ps. 119:9-11)
12. We praise you, God, that each woman who requested a Bible has received one from the Serbian TWR Women of Hope team. May your Word powerfully transform their hearts. (Ps. 119:105)
13. Young women and girls in Spain feel pressure to conform to the values of a hypersexualized society. Lord, protect their minds and bodies. (Rom. 12:2)

14. Father, reveal yourself to young people in Sweden and help them to seek your heart in choices that will define their lives. (Jer. 29:13)
15. God, please protect the women and girls in Albania. Murders in Albania were up by 13 per cent in 2021, one-third of them being women killed by family members and partners. (Ps. 27:2)
16. Gracious God, give grace and discernment to Christian women in Croatia who have unbelieving husbands. Help them be a godly witness to them. (1 Cor. 7:13-14)
17. Lord, we pray for families in Denmark who have members with mental illness. Please intervene and bring healing to their hearts and minds. (Isa. 35:3-4a)
18. Father, at one per week, the suicide rate in Greenland is one of the highest in the world. Reveal yourself and bring hope to the hopeless. (Prov. 17:22)
19. Lord, we pray for a change of hearts, attitudes and practices among Finnish business leaders so that women would be paid equal to their male counterparts for the same work. (Isa. 1:17)

From a listener in Albania: "I am from the Roma community, and I like to listen to your radio program. Women of Hope provides me a lot of advice for raising children. I have four little children and it is a struggle to provide daily bread for them. Thank you for praying for us and helping whenever you can. God bless you."

From a listener in Bulgaria: "This program changed my life. I have one child and we are reading the Bible together. In many of these programs, I find useful topics that help me in my daily spiritual growth. Thank you for your work and may the Lord give you wisdom in this ministry."

From a listener in Portugal: "I learn from your words while listening to your program. I realize there were some lies I believed, and they were harming me and my daughter. I believed that I had to be perfect and was always trying to do more and do it better, but now I see that I do my best every day to be a good mother. Thank you for the very sure words you used. God bless you."

From a listener in Albania: "The program called 'You are not alone' was a very good help to me. A new friend sent me this program. I listened to it and it really helped me. I have an autistic daughter and she is almost 18. It is very difficult for me to handle her. We do not do therapy because we cannot afford it. This program has helped me understand that I am not alone and God is with me. The girls in the programs have been so good to me. They have brought food in a time when the only food we had was water with sugar. They have encouraged me to read the Bible and to go to church. God bless you."

From a listener in Bulgaria: "Thank God for this program. I listen to it regularly and learn how to better serve God and how to take better care of my family. What I learn I share in the family, and I teach the children how to pray and be good Christians. Thank you and may the Lord give you wisdom in the ministry you have."



# Bringing Healing, Hope and Harmony

by Biljana Dolic, TWR Women of Hope National Coordinator in Serbia

Serbia is an outwardly beautiful country, but one with a turbulent history filled with recent wars, national and religious intolerance, and difficulty for its people. One of the groups most affected are Serbia's women.

Because women are not offered the same rights as men and often do not have access to education, many of them feel marginalized and invisible. Abuse, neglect and exploitation of women is common here. This is why the TWR Women of Hope ministry comes to this uneasy land as a medicine that is healing broken hearts and emotions, restoring hope, and bringing harmony to relationships.

Each day, a short message, prayer or Bible verse reaches almost 10,000 women in Serbia and 7,000 women in Croatia through our Facebook and Instagram pages and YouTube channel. Women have the opportunity to hear how valuable and loved they are by the one who created them and has a wonderful plan for their lives. It is

beautiful to see the transformation women experience when they meet Jesus and his wonderful love restores their identity, dignity and hope.

Our team here in Serbia works very closely with the *Women of Hope* team next door in Croatia. They record the *Women of Hope* programs in Croatian, and we do so in Serbian. These programs are unique in this region. Until now there has not been a program intended specifically for women that provided them with practical instructions for life as well as a biblical perspective on various problems and situations.

God has also opened the door for us to begin translating and producing programs for a new series of women's programming called *Precious & Beloved*. As our team helps develop and grow the ministry in Croatia, we are excited for that team's desire to also begin broadcasting *Precious & Beloved* in their country next year.



Prayer is also another important part of our ministry in Serbia. Each month we translate and print the TWR Women of Hope prayer calendar. Large groups of women in Serbia gather regularly to pray for women around the world using this calendar.

There are many other ways we minister to Serbian women. We help those in need by bringing them

food, clothing and other necessities for life. Our desire is to offer free copies of the Bible to everyone, and we have made it possible for thousands of women to get their first copies of the Holy Scriptures. We also work among women of Roma ethnicity. The content in our *Women of Hope* programs brings hope and healing to these girls and women, regardless of age.

- 20. God, help the German TWR Women of Hope team to effectively support both their staff and various international projects through effective communication, encouragement and prayer. (Col. 1:9)
- 21. Father, in this turbulent time we ask for peace of mind for those in the North Caucasus so they may support each other and not be discouraged. (1 John 4:11)
- 22. Lord, please give strength and encouragement for all involved in the TWR Women of Hope prayer ministry in Norway. (Rom. 12:12)
- 23. Father, may your peace and protection be upon the people and country of Poland. (Ps. 20:1)
- 24. Father, we ask you to heal women in Portugal who are experiencing anxiety and depression because of the recent pandemic. (John 14:1)
- 25. Lord God, please bless the guests on the *Women of Hope* programs in Romania who have shared about your wonderful works and thereby encouraged many women. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)
- 26. Father, may the ministry to the Roma in Serbia continue to

grow. Use this Serbian team to share with Roma women that they are loved and accepted by you. (Rom. 8:14-16)

- 27. As Spanish youth interact on social media and the internet, they receive false messages that may cause them to despair and contemplate suicide. Lord, reveal your love, truth and peace to them. (Jer. 29:11)
- 28. God, may the churches in Sweden invite your Spirit to fill them with faith and prayer so that people will be drawn to you and see your goodness! (Ps. 34:8-9)
- 29. Lord, help Albanian parents to understand the benefits of education and encourage their daughters to finish school. (Prov. 4:13)
- 30. Father God, we ask that you give wisdom and strength to parents in Croatia who are raising children in this challenging time. (Deut. 6:6-7)
- 31. Father, we ask that you provide the funds needed so TWR Women of Hope in Portugal may continue to minister to women there. (2 Cor. 9:8)



## STORY OF HOPE

# Support in Relationships



The ministry of TWR Women of Hope in the North Caucasus brings peace and consolation to people in this region of southwestern Russia. And this is not merely a slogan!

In 1999, a tense situation in the North Caucasus led to war, and people were dying. Missionaries left the Muslim republics, and churches were destroyed. The Caucasus people remember that difficult time, for the wounds have not yet healed. People have experienced hunger, loss of loved ones and homelessness. Now they're experiencing a different though similar fear: There is no peace, only anxiety and weariness.

The women are eager to hear and see signs of goodness and light. There is a thirst for hope and encouragement. It is the perfect time, therefore, for the ministry of TWR Women of Hope!

Each month, we visit three families that belong to the dominant religion of the area. The testimony of Alina and her son, Marat,\* touch our hearts in a very special way. Alina is a widow. Having lost her husband and little daughter, her only hope remains with her 10-year-old son. They have no relatives to help them in their difficulty.

A few years ago, Alina was diagnosed with cancer, and a year later, her son was diagnosed with cancer as well. Alina prayed to our almighty God to not let her die while Marat is still alive, as there would then be no one to look after him. Eventually, her health began to suffer because her disability pension provided only enough to buy medicine for Marat. At that very moment when Alina was alone and needed support, God introduced us to her.

Now Alina is suffering from Hepatitis C. Although the disease is progressing, she still has only enough money to buy medicine for Marat. She sacrifices for the sake of a loved one, much like Christ sacrificed for each of us. The North Caucasus TWR Women of Hope team takes Alina to the hospital and does what they can to cover her basic medical bills. Watching her health decline has been painful, and we pray with Alina that the Lord Jesus would provide whatever is needed for her to fully recover.

We often ask ourselves, "What have I been worrying about lately?" As we consider Alina and Marat's story, most of the worries in our lives may not look so significant anymore. As our team visits Alina, trying to support her, we pray together and talk about Jesus. We realize that our faith must not consist of words alone; we need to act on our faith through deeds!

Please join us in praying fervently for Alina and Marat today.

\* Pseudonyms are used to protect their privacy.

## Welcoming a New Leader for a New Era: Introducing Susie Pek

The TWR Women of Hope staff worldwide are thrilled to welcome Susie Pek of Brazil as our new leader. She is only the third global director of the ministry since it was founded by Marli Spieker 25 years ago.

Officially beginning her new role in February, Susie follows in the footsteps of Dr. Peggy Banks, who dynamically shepherded TWR Women of Hope for the past six years. Dr. Banks was called to serve in another ministry at the end of 2022.

In a farewell message to ministry friends and workers, Dr. Peggy Banks said, *“May you continue to sow seeds into the work that God is doing through TWR Women of Hope as we work to bring hope in Jesus to women. ... You are a crucial part of this ministry, and I cannot thank you enough for your invaluable support.”*

The main reason staff and volunteers are so excited about Susie’s appointment – in addition to her impressive achievements as an author, broadcaster and blogger – is her ongoing involvement with the ministry. She’s served with TWR Women of Hope for 14 years and until recently was our regional coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.

*“I am so thankful to Dr. Peggy Banks and to all of our amazing global staff and volunteers who have loved our women so well,”* she said. *“Psalm 34:5 says, ‘Those who look to the Lord are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.’*

*“As I embark on this new journey, I look to the Lord for wisdom and guidance to help women around the world and across generations to look to Jesus, be radiant and experience his grace and hope.”*

Echoing TWR International President Lauren Libby, we invite the TWR Women of Hope family to pray earnestly for Dr. Banks as she serves God in new ways and for Susie as she guides us into a new era.

## MEET SUSIE PEK

Susie has two great passions – prayer, and soothing pain and promoting hope and healing for women. And that’s what attracted her to TWR Women of Hope at RTM Brazil where she has served for 14 years. She started as an assistant and producer in Brazil, served as National Coordinator and as TWR Women of Hope Regional coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.

As a producer and presenter of the radio program *Women of Hope*, columnist of a devotional program and a blog writer, Susie has become a recognized voice in her country. She is often invited to speak at conferences and events all over Brazil. In 2022, TWR Brazil published her devotional book *Hope Encounters*.

Her love for Jesus and desire to make him known led her to study theology, go through mission training and enter the ministry more than 20 years ago. Furthermore, Susie is a teacher and translator/interpreter.

She’s been married for 24 years (since January 1999) to Douglas Pek who is the minister of administration at Calvary International Church, an associate of TWR Brazil, presenter of the program *Champions Arise* in Portuguese and volunteer as designer for TWR Women of Hope Brazil. They are both from São Paulo – Brazil, where they currently live.



# APRIL

1. Lord, reveal yourself to lonely people in Sweden who feel that life is meaningless. Help them to avoid empty pursuits that intensify their feelings of loneliness. (Ps. 36:9)
2. The number of immigrant women in Spain has increased exponentially in the last 10 years. Father, protect them against sex trafficking and improve their quality of life. (Deut. 10:18-19)
3. God, may the negative influence of media on young women and girls be broken. Use the Serbian TWR Women of Hope ministry to teach young people to find their true identities in you. (Ezek. 36:26-27)
4. Father, we pray for inspiration for our Romanian team as they write the *Women of Hope* programs that feature meaningful content and guest speakers that help listeners know and love you more. (Ps. 40:10)
5. Father God, please restore the dire economic situation in Portugal to normal so people may be able to buy food at reasonable prices. (Matt. 6:25)
6. In Greenland, 37 per cent of children live without a father. Strengthen single mothers who must balance child care, work and study. Provide godly male mentors for these children. (Ps. 68:5)
7. Lord, give wisdom to Poland's leaders in improving their health services for women and in increasing pay so Polish physicians aren't forced to emigrate to find better-paying jobs. (James 1:5)
8. God, we ask for increased funding for TWR Women of Hope in Norway so they can share the gospel with more unreached people groups. (Mark 16:15)
9. Lord, so many Albanian women suffer from depression. Bring healing to their minds and bodies as they cry out to you. Lead them to others who can help. (Deut. 31:8)
10. In the North Caucasus, God, please bring new subscribers to the *Women of Hope* programs, which go out over different platforms because of sanctions on social media. (2 Cor. 4:16)
11. Mighty Father, lead those women working in prostitution in Germany to the *Hidden Treasure* audio series so they may find security and a new life in Jesus. (Isa. 45:3)

12. Give strength and encouragement, God, to Finnish women who feel overwhelmed and discouraged as they fulfill career and family responsibilities. (Matt. 11:28)
13. Lord, break the chains of alcohol addiction of parents in Greenland and the Faroe Islands. May they raise their children in a godly way. (Prov. 22:6)



14. God, may the women attending the Norwegian TWR Women of Hope conference from April 14-16 be encouraged and become more engaged in your work. (1 Thess. 5:11)
15. Father, we pray for the Danish people to understand how precious life is and that children are a gift from God. (Ps. 139:13-16)
16. We praise you, God, that the number of followers and interactions on TWR Women of Hope's Facebook page in Croatia is growing. (Ps. 71:8)
17. Lord, please provide jobs and housing for the women of Albania who leave domestic-abuse shelters but turn to prostitution because they have no money to raise their children. (Matt. 6:11)
18. Father, draw young criminals in Sweden to believe in and follow you. May they stop destroying their own and others' lives. (Mark 1:17)
19. God, help Christian grandmothers in Spain who have become caregivers because of family crises or divorce to be godly biblical influences on their grandchildren. (Deut. 6:6-7)
20. Father, guide those working on translating and producing the new *Precious & Beloved* program. Through this program, may women in Serbia and Croatia know your love and find their dignity and value in you. (1 Pet. 3:4)
21. God, please strengthen Christian women in Romania to be faithful witnesses for you during these troubled times. (Matt. 5:13-16)

22. Lord, give grace, wisdom and creativity to the TWR Women of Hope Portugal team as they create scripts for new ministry programs. (Prov. 2:6)
23. We ask, God, that you protect the social position, well-being and legal security of Polish women. Be their protector and provider. (Ps. 5:11)
24. Father, we pray for wisdom for TWR Women of Hope listeners in the North Caucasus who have hard marriages. May they find hope in your love. (James 1:12)
25. Lord, we thank you for the successful German TWR Women of Hope prayer gathering in 2022 and for those who support the ministry financially and with their prayers. (Mal. 3:10)
26. Father, guide the depressed and lonely in Finland to reflect on your truths and know that they are not alone. Help them to connect with people and resources that can help them. (Deut. 31:8)
27. God, grow the Christian work among students in Greenland. May these young people have a Christian community where they can read the Bible and find encouragement. (1 Thess. 5:11)
28. Lord, we ask you to give the small TWR Women of Hope team in Denmark encouragement and inspiration in their ministry. (Phil. 4:13)
29. Heavenly Father, we pray that single moms in Croatia will be able to get regular child support from their ex-husbands. (Matt. 7:9)
30. Lord, strengthen the Albanian church to be light in this dark world. May they come alongside women to help them live godly, productive lives. (Eph. 5:8)



# Lectio Divina

A Word of Hope from Lisa Hall,  
International Prayer Coordinator

reading time, I love to use the church's 1,500-year-old practice of Lectio Divina – slowly reading and holding the Word of God, reflecting on it, listening, and then receiving it into my life. It has led to a much more intimate relationship with God and a desire to understand in a practical way how we, his children, are to abide and dwell with him. We are called to unity with God, and it involves a communion of our spirits.

Prayerful sacred reading is one way that believers over the years have cultivated their relationship with God. I've found it helpful to focus on a short passage or single verse in Scripture. Some verses you may want to begin with are Psalm 25:4-5, Colossians 3:16, Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 19:12-14, 1 Peter 5:7, James 1:2-4, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Philippians 4:8, Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 32:8, Psalm 145:8-9 – really, almost any Psalm is a good choice!

There are six phases to this practice:

1. **Silence** – Before reading a short Bible passage, let go of your agenda, quiet yourself and surrender to God.
2. **Reading/listening** – Slowly read the short passage aloud, perhaps several times. What words catch your attention and speak to your heart?

This year we are going to be looking at many practical ways to grow in our prayer life with God, and I am beginning with the one that has been the most meaningful to me, Lectio Divina, the ancient practice of contemplative or prayerful reading of the Scriptures.

After becoming a Christian as a child, I spent my life reading, memorizing and studying the Scriptures on my own, in Bible college and with various church leaders. I knew a lot of details and information about the Bible and had a strong relationship with God, but I found myself longing for more intimacy with him and desiring to hear his voice in my day-to-day life. I wanted more.

In the past few years, I have continued reading and studying the Scriptures. But during my devotional

*continued on the next page...*

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# Lectio Divina, cont'd

3. **Meditating** – Repeat those phrases to which you are drawn. What is God speaking to you about them? How do they relate to your life? Reflect on them.

4. **Praying** – Give these thoughts and feelings to God in prayer. How is God leading you to pray? Respond to him with thanksgiving, confession and petition.

5. **Contemplating** – In silence, rest in God, listen to him and give him space to work in your life. What is God showing you? How is God revealing himself to you?

6. **Incarnating** – How can you live out what God has shown you today?

How is God transforming your inner being or outer activities?

I would also encourage you to journal the passage and what God reveals to your heart and mind. Record your reflections and any actions that you need to take.

When we come to the Scriptures ready to receive from the living God whose Spirit lives in us, he can reveal truth to our hearts and minds that both transform and renew us. As we openly respond to his Word, we give God the opportunity to give us new perspectives, change our attitudes and actions, and breathe new life into our spirits. God longs to speak to us and communicate his heart.



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