

Greeting

As the President of the Kaiserswerth General Conference, and on behalf of the presidium, I have the pleasure to warmly welcome you to Gallneukirchen Diakonie for the 42nd General Assembly held since its founding in 1861. As the board of Diakoniewerk, we are delighted to welcome you in this year, with the recent completion of the renovations to the former Deaconess Motherhouse Bethanien and the country's special exhibit of the development of social services and programs.

It has been 4 years since the last assembly with the 150th anniversary celebrations. Along with other things, the presidium has dedicated this time to reflecting on previous activities and addressing the critical question of the future importance and role of the General Conference. This also led the conversation with the board of the German Kaiserwerth Association (Kaiserswerther Verband) to the result of desiring to strengthen their own network and foster cooperation with other European and international diaconal initiatives.

The theme of our conference – “Diakonia: A Strong Brand?! Between Values and Commerce” - shows what particularly concerns us as the presidium: the question of the identity of Kaiserwerth tradition communities and institutions in transformation processes. What can, and do we wish to do, in order for sisterhoods and diaconal projects to further develop and continue the Kaiserswerth heritage and characteristics so that under changing conditions, they may move confidently and boldly into the future. It is also part of our self-understanding, that in a time in which countless people seek to flee the inferno of war, terror and violence in their homeland, we make our contribution to the love of neighbor, as we disagree with hostile refugee slogans and offer the possibilities that we have as diaconal agencies, which give concrete help and demonstrate our values.

So let us worship together in the name of God, who wants all people to live in peace and security, who became human in Jesus Christ, who inspires us to live in freedom and responsibility, and who stands with us as the Holy Spirit to ensure that our plans and programs bring justice and fulfillment to the lives of others. Amen.

We have come together from all directions, from south to north, from Brazil to Lahti, from east to west, from South Korea to the United States to be with each other, to have meetings and exchanges, to learn from each other and with each other across borders, languages and cultures, but joined together in Jesus Christ.

Rector Christa Schrauf
President