

The Social Welfare Service of the Protestant Churches in Württemberg



Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are delighted that you are interested in Diakonie in Württemberg, Germany. Diakonie (diaconia) stands for the social services work of the Protestant Churches. Because faith in Jesus Christ and practiced charity belong together, diaconal services and institutions are committed to offering help for many needs. Diakonie services help people who need support and whose lives are impaired by socially unjust conditions. Diakonie tries to alleviate such social conditions. Diakonie derives from the Greek notion of “service”.

The Diakonisches Werk Württemberg is the umbrella association gathering all the social service institutions and entities that exist within the Protestant Churches in Württemberg. More than 1,400 services and social work units provide help, support and companionship to old people and people in need of care, to children, youth, and families, to mentally or psychologically ill people, to the handicapped, unemployed, homeless, and heavily indebted people. In each of the church districts of the regional Protestant Church of Württemberg, there are diaconal district service points. They serve as a first contact point for people in distress who are suffering from material or psychological hardship. Also these service points offer support to church communities in their own diaconal work.

More than 50,000 are employed within Diakonie in Württemberg, another 35,000 voluntary workers are committed to activities within Diakonie. The Social Welfare Service of the Protestant Churches in Württemberg has its seat in Stuttgart.

Come and visit with us – Diakonie and her many services and institutions in Württemberg are happy to receive you as our guest.

History

It was at the beginning of the 19th century that committed Protestant Christians founded the organized Diakonie. Going by the name “Inner Mission” (Innere Mission) they drafted a program fighting poverty, in material as well as in spiritual terms. In 1823, the “Stuttgart Private Society of Volunteers and Friends for the Poor” (Stuttgarter Privatgesellschaft freiwilliger Armenfreunde) had founded the first rescue home for girls and boys who had suffered the loss of their parents and their homestead. Soon after, care for blind and deaf people, and for sick and handicapped people, was set up. In the towns and villages, deaconesses were entrusted with the community care for the sick. In 1914, the services in Württemberg merged into a single association under the name “Regional Network of Inner Mission” (Landesverband der Inneren Mission).

The period between 1933 and 1945 saw the institution of Diakonie burdening itself of grave guilt. Initially, even leading men of the Church and of the Inner Mission welcomed the “new times.” However, as time went on, resistance within the Church and Diakonie began to form against the Naziregime. Yet, 10,000 mentally handicapped people were murdered in Württemberg. They fell victim to the program run by the national socialist leaders called “Program to exterminate unworthy life” (Programm zur Vernichtung unwerten Lebens).

After the Second World War, so many Germans suffered great hardship. This misery prompted committed Christians to start the second diaconal aid agency. In 1945, the “Evangelisches Hilfswerk” (Protestant Aid Organization) was founded. The task was huge as 14 million refugees and displaced persons needed assistance, those who had to flee the bombings, the children and old people threatened with hunger. Old peoples’ homes and houses for families were built, young people were provided with a place to stay, with work and food. Church district services distributed food, clothing, and medication.

In 1970, the Regional Network “Landesverband” and the Protestant Aid Organization merged to become the association “Diakonisches Werk der evangelischen Kirche in Württemberg e.V.” which is the Social Welfare Service of the Protestant Churches in Württemberg. For social problems to be alleviated and solved more effectively, the German government typically does not offer social services run by the government itself but rather commissions independent, non-governmental agencies and services with these tasks. Diakonie is one of such services and thus is a partner when it comes to designing and framing the German social welfare state. The German government allocates financial resources for carrying out these tasks. This system is known in Europe as the principle of “subsidiarity”.

Diakonie's Guiding Principle

“People first“ is the motto of all of the Diakonie net work in Württemberg. It highlights the bond that unites all of the services and institutions – what is important to all of them. It also provides a basis for the direction in which Diakonie should develop in the future. “People first“ is a guideline for all of Diakonie in Württemberg, it is also a binding commitment for all. It serves as a common foundation for their work.

The individual members of the Diakonie network and their services use this guiding principle and they may add an additional principle according to their specific field of work.



The Guiding Principle has ten basic theses. Each thesis is based on what the work specialization or the situation at hand is for each service:

- The biblical message is the mission and also encouragement for Diakonie.
- The dignity of the human being is the center point of Diakonie.
- The tradition of Diakonie serves as a continuous impuls for renewal.
- Diakonie is part of the Church.
- The task of Diakonie is to actively work and strive for a just and solidary society.
- The Regional Network of Diakonie is alive only because of the joint effort of all its members.
- The members of the Regional Network of Diakonie work together in a spirit of partnership.
- The employees, being actively involved, give Diakonie a face.
- Diakonie stands for quality.
- Acting economically responsible means fulfilling the mission of Diakonie.

Means of Financing

The modes of financing differ and are dependent on the work field of Diakonie.

Own resources and Social Security Funds:

Diakonie delivers many forms of assistance which the people needing help pay for themselves. German Social Security assumes a part of these expenses and thus take some of the burden off those who need assistance. For instance, intensive care in an old peoples' home, or at the old person's home, is being assumed in part by the health care insurances mandatory in Germany – the remainder being assumed by those who need this care. German Social Security helps finance the rehabilitation measures and rehabilitation hospitals run by Diakonie. The German Federal Employment Office supports the Diakonie services assisting unemployed people.

Subsidies from Public Funds:

Part of the expenses are being supported from public funds (federal level, state level and municipal level). For example, the state pays for a part of the costs occurring in treating drug or alcohol addicts or for women struggling with pregnancy (regarding abortion). Or, the municipalities pay for integration services for handicapped and give additional funds benefitting mentally, or psychologically ill people or those heavily indebted.

Church Tax:

Every member of the Protestant Church in Germany has to pay a church tax (collected in lieu by the German Internal Revenue Service). This tax is levied according to the member's income and/or salary. The majority of consultancy services and contact points of the diaconal district services are being funded by this church tax. Child day care centers receive supplementary funds. Furthermore, assistance for immigrants from the former Soviet Union, for foreigners and for refugees are being financed. Also, the office of Diakonie Württemberg is being supported by church tax funds.

Donations:

This kind of financial means is becoming increasingly important. Thanks to donations, Diakonie is able to help those who do not have a rightful claim for help and for whom nobody feels responsible. Poor people get meals at no cost in the so-called "Vesperkirchen" – food churches – and they get free medical aid. Or, they can buy food at very low prices in special shops. Families with handicapped children also get help in a non-bureaucratic way ("Offene Hilfen"). Last but not least, without such donations it would not be possible to assist people after catastrophes in Germany and abroad.



Sichtbares Zeichen der Diakonie ist das Kronenkreuz. Es sind die stilisierten Anfangsbuchstaben von **I**nnerer **M**ission. Erst später wurde das Signet als „Kronenkreuz“ bezeichnet. Es gilt heute als Zeichen der Ermutigung für die Mitarbeitenden in der Diakonie: das Kreuz als Hinweis auf Not und Tod, die Krone als Zeichen der Hoffnung und Auferstehung. Die Verbindung von Kreuz und Krone soll die Zuversicht festigen, dass Not zu überwinden ist, weil Christus Not und Tod überwunden hat.

Struktur der württembergischen Diakonie

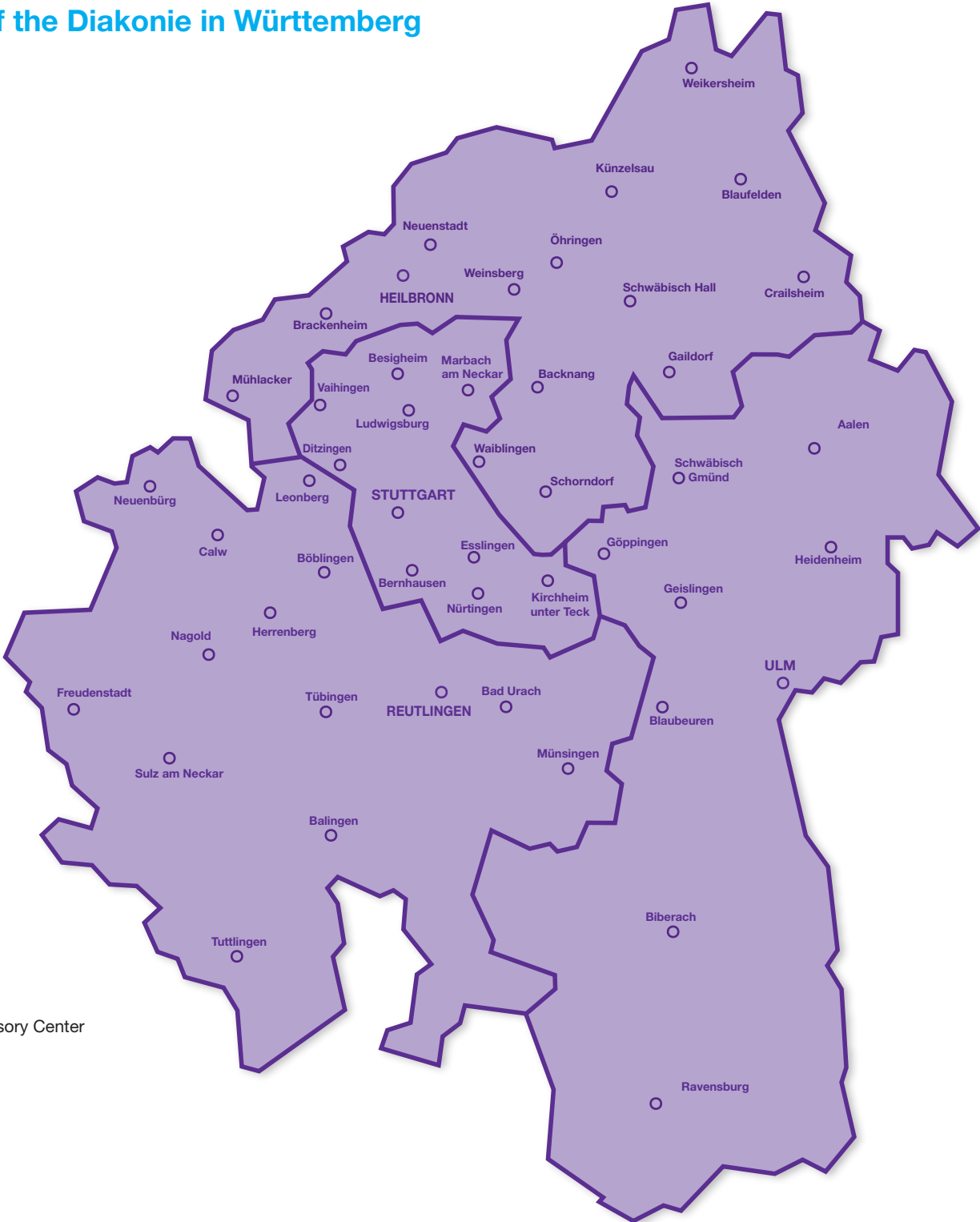
Die Diakonie bietet ihre Dienste wohnortnah an. Sie ist in ganz Württemberg präsent. Verbandsstrukturen fördern die intensive Zusammenarbeit der verschiedenen Einrichtungen und Dienste der württembergischen Diakonie.

Die Mitgliederversammlung entscheidet über die grundsätzliche Orientierung der Diakonie. Der Verbandsrat achtet auf die Umsetzung der Beschlüsse der Mitgliederversammlung. Der Aufsichtsrat ist ein aus drei Personen bestehendes Präsidium. Der hauptamtliche dreiköpfige Vorstand leitet und koordiniert die Arbeit des Verbandes und der Landesgeschäftsstelle. Dort sind rund 300 Menschen tätig.

Das Diakonische Werk Württemberg

- Als Wohlfahrtswerk der evangelischen Kirche ist es der Zusammenschluss aller Einrichtungen kirchlicher sozialer Arbeit und unterstützt die Kirche bei der Umsetzung des diakonischen Auftrags.
- Als Zusammenschluss der Mitglieder ist es Dienstleister für diakonische Einrichtungen und Dienste, bündelt deren Interessen und vertritt diese gegenüber Politik und Kirche.
- Als Wohlfahrtsverband ist es Partner des Staates bei der Ausgestaltung des Sozialstaates. Der Staat bietet in eigener Regie keine sozialen Dienste an. Er beauftragt unter anderem freie Wohlfahrtswerke wie die Diakonie. Sie erhält für diese Arbeit finanzielle Zuschüsse. Dieses System nennt man Subsidiaritätsprinzip.
- Als Organisation in der Nachfolge Jesu ist es Anwalt für benachteiligte Menschen. Es setzt sich dafür ein, die gesellschaftlichen Ursachen von Armut und Ausgrenzung zu beheben und soziale Gerechtigkeit zu schaffen.

The area of the Diakonie in Württemberg



○ Seat of the Advisory Center

What Diakonie offers in Württemberg



Welfare for children, youth and families



Support for the unemployed, for the homeless, for the heavily indebted, and for other poor people in society



Support for girls and women in distress



Support for migrants and refugees, especially when discriminated against



Care for old people



Support for drug addicts and those at risk



Aid for handicapped people



Care for the sick

In-patient service units, outpatient units, as well as day services and individual care for a person – all that is within the range of offerings provided by Diakonie.

Diakonie creates jobs on the market that is sponsored by the government.

Also, Diakonie provides for special shopping centers for the poor. Diakonie runs schools, and job training for young people, it offers placement for conscientious objectors and for a whole range of volunteer work, including work for young The regional main office in people from abroad.

www.diakonie-wuerttemberg.de

International Task

The Social Welfare Service of the Protestant Churches in Württemberg is a member of the Social Welfare Service of the Protestant Church in Germany (Diakonisches Werk Deutschland). In this capacity, it actively supports the international aid work of Diakonie:

Brot für die Welt

The Action Programme “Bread for the World” started in 1959. All Regional and Free Protestant Churches are involved. The financial means for the projects are acquired through private donations and church collections. The idea is to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the impoverished and disadvantaged in the developing countries by projects encouraging self help.

Diakonie **Katastrophenhilfe**

The Emergency and Disaster Relief Programme mostly provides rapid aid by distributing food, tents, blankets, clothing etc. on-site in the distressed areas. Assistance may also be organized on a medium-term level, for instance by providing seeds and tools. The funds for this aid come mainly from private donations, but also from grants allocated by the German Federal Government and the European Union. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe often cooperates with other non-governmental donor agencies.

Hoffnung für Osteuropa

The donation collection programme “Hope for Eastern Europe” initiated in 1994, was the response of the Protestant Churches witnessing the social changes in Central and Eastern Europe.

www.diakonie-wuerttemberg.de/international/

Donations account

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