

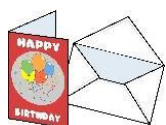


St. Simon & St. Jude CWL Council - Newsletter 2023

Warm greetings to all St. Simon & St. Jude CWL Sisters

Greetings of the new year, 2024. As we begin the second and last year of this term, we would like to share with all of you some of the accomplishments of last year as well as our focus going forward. In July, we bid farewell to our Spiritual Advisor, Rev. Rob Renaud and welcomed Rev. Mark Poulin as our new advisor- a true gift to our council. Our council implemented some structural changes as set out by the CWL National Council with goals to streamline the executive and encourage greater membership participation in all aspects of the council. **Executive will be recognized as President, Past-President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and three pillars of Faith, Service and Social Justice.** Past-President & Historian is an unelected position. Volunteer assistants to these positions are appointed as required. Also under consideration is the need to fill executive positions for the 2025/26 term and the coordination of upcoming events and plans for 2024. We have an urgent need for a Faith Pillar assistant and a Social Coordinator/Committee. Both are on our prayer and wish list. Hopefully this speaks to you! We are blessed with our members and encourage you to share your unique talents and gifts. **New members are our future!**

Secretary/Correspondence Dianne McVitty: "We are stronger when we listen and smarter when we share." (*Queen Rania, Jordan*). To this end, the Executive wanted members to decide the focus of their council. A survey was submitted to attending members and the reported results will direct the programming for 2024-2025. We will endeavour to keep our members informed and we welcome your input.



Correspondence Assistant Elaine Cohoe was on top of things sending out 63 milestone birthday cards, 49 sympathy cards, 15 get well cards, 33 Christmas cards as well as Christmas wishes to 40 veterans.

LaChaumiere residents (33) were treated to member-made Valentine cards. These recognitions remind members that our thoughts and prayers are with them at all times. Visitations were arranged to resident care homes formalizing our commitment to aging and ill members. Along with these remembrances, this program bridges our council with the community, sharing newsletters and other correspondence.

Theresa Cullen, Communication Assistant, provides us with ongoing information through the bulletin, Facebook and church website. She uses her expertise and personal touch (magic) to keep us informed of events, acknowledgements, notifications and needs.

Michelle Reaume shares Secretary and Treasurer Assistant positions. She manages our membership responsibilities with a noteworthy resolve. Hours are spent gathering membership details and recording results in one of the largest memberships of the diocese. Indicative of this was our 2023 membership of 190 including eight new members. Seventeen service pins acknowledged ten-fifty years of membership. We are also proud of participation of 25-30 members who attend the monthly meetings and social gathering regularly; a true sisterhood!

Treasurer Linda Prestyko reports the committed fundraising of St. Simon and St. Jude CWL, notably the Fall Bazaar and various year-round food and material donations, allowed us to contribute to our parish, our community, and global initiatives in 2023. The members' hard work and commitment allowed us to provide \$30,000 to our various parish, charities and council goals. **THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**



Historian/Past-President Lee Levergood. Our archives are in the dedicated and capable hands of Historian and Past-President Lee Levergood. Pictures and articles celebrating events such as installation of the new executive, special luncheons, ceremonies and social events, are kept in a formal format for remembrance and sharing. A recent documented highlight was the celebration and crowning of "Princess Rosella Pinsonneault" in celebration of her 99th birthday. We have an extensive history that we are proud of and celebrate. An open invitation to all members to peruse the archives to become aware of our rich history and share a few chuckles. Members' past and present photos or articles are always a welcomed addition. Looking forward to gathering new 2024 "memories".

Faith: Mary Lou Hamelin

We adopted the CWL 2023 National Theme: "Catholic and Living It." With this in mind we endeavored to focus on prayer, friendship, and faith based commitments. In doing so we strove and continue to focus on making our world a better place for the glory of God. In March we joined our Christian Sisters at the Belle River United Church to celebrate the World Day of Prayer together. We are hosting the World Day of Prayer on March 1, 2024. During lent we coordinated the Lenten Soup and Stations. May's meeting brought us together for the Rosary.

We supported our children receiving the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation with recognition at the masses and gifts of holy pictures, bookmarks and prayer cards. Pope Francis designate 2023-2024 the year for vocations and our prayers were directed to this end. Our three treasured and transferred priest were presented with Spiritual Bouquets. We mourned and honoured the loss of eight CWL sisters who died in 2023. At our Advent Tea 27 members meditated on "Mary's Journey" and share the fellowship of the CWL sisterhood. Pope Francis calls us to pray for Mary's intercession to help us walk with Jesus toward holiness. Our commitment in 2024 will be to honour this call through faith, prayer, reflections and charity.



Service: Pam Trepanier started her focus on community responsibilities organizing "Project Snowflake" providing homemade hats and scarves for residents of St. Joachim Manor. The 2023 Bursary of \$500.00, available to qualified children/grandchildren of CWL members, was presented to Natasha Kovacs, daughter of Holly. Two presentations were provided by CWL members of the Eberhart family. In February Catherine explained her position as coordinator of our family of parishes' "Ministries and Outreach" and in September her mother Laurie presented on "40 Days for life" campaign. "Palliative Care Week" was acknowledged by a day of visitation and meditation at the church. Pam also attended the Catholic Bishops overview on Palliative Care "Horizons of Hope" and will be addressing this project in the new year. The St. Vincent de Paul "Miracle of Hope" food drive was promoted and we enjoyed hosting the "Parish Café's first outdoor function. Mental Health was addressed as a group with a mental health" Funday". Bringing us back in September Pam reviewed health options to alleviate vulnerability during the flu and cold season. Various food and clothing drives throughout the year directed focus on charity and community support. One highlighted drive, the Our Lady of Guadalupe Home (residence for mothers in crisis) provided Christmas Gifts for seven mothers and children. We will continue through 2024 to meet the mandate of this program through service to our council, parish, and global challenges.



Although **Social Justice** is an unfilled position this term, the executive pulled together to meet the responsibility of this program's mandate and responded to various items. This included shared communication of legislation regarding dignity and rights of persons (Right to Life, Canadian Disability Act, Mental Health Protection Act, MAID, Palliative Care) and social and economic justice (Outreach). Donations to various agencies and organizations cemented our commitment to the Social Justice mandate. We promoted the movie "Sound of Freedom" which addressed the tragedy of human trafficking and was shown at the local cinema. Members were encouraged to write or sign petitions that matched the CWL philosophy of human dignity and rights. We will endeavour to keep members informed of social and justice issues.

The Essex County Regional Chair is held by our own Jeanne Lauzon. This group of nine Essex region CWL councils meets together and liaisons with the diocese. Our members have participated in their Oxley retreats and open meetings. Regional support, shared information, and sisterhood benefits all involved.



Although in desperate need of a designated Social Coordinator, our ladies came together to put on a wonderful Christmas Party in November and 2 Fun Days, one in March and one in May. The fun day in March consisted of easy, fun games set up by a few members and the one in May was a Tea & Card Party, where we brought our own table of ladies along with a board game or cards of our choosing.

As we anticipate 2024, we pray to God to continue to provide us with the grace to spread our faith through corporal and spiritual works of mercy, to increase the strength of our sisterhood and to seek the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, our protectorate.

*Blessings,
Jackie Gomes,
President St. Simon & St. Jude CWL*