

Edmonton Diocesan CWL

Issue Fall 2024



Mission Statement

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.

Faith

Service

Social
Justice



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Adopt a Seminarian

Begun in 1998 to support and encourage vocations, men attending St. Joseph's Seminary are each 'adopted' by a council. The council prays for them, invites them to some of the council's special occasions, sends them cards or letters, and/or asks them to speak at meetings. Sign up to adopt a seminarian is done each year at the Fall Meeting. Contact: edmontoncwl.faith@gmail.com

Books for Schools Project

Started in 2022 to encourage relationship building between CWLs and the schools in their area. The Diocesan Officers make recommendations of books each year. The parish CWL council may choose to provide the book to one or more schools in their area by donating it to the school library. Members are encouraged to do this during Read-In Week in October, and may arrange to read the book when presenting it to the school. Contact: edmontoncwl.service@gmail.com

Feed the Hungry

Started in 2023, councils in the Edmonton area were asked to participate in outreach work in downtown Edmonton by providing and serving a hot meal on the 1st and 5th Saturdays of the month. These are served beside Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples to the needy in that area. Contact: edmontoncwl.service@gmail.com

Refugee Welcome Bags

started in the early 1990s, needed items and money are collected from councils and bags are created to help provide some basic needs to refugees who are arriving in Edmonton through Catholic Social Services. Currently St. Joseph's Basilica is coordinating this project but we are looking for another council to take this over. Contact: edmontoncwl.service@gmail.com

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It was an honour to be together with so many of you at our Diocesan Fall Executive Meeting on September 28th in Rimbey. St. Margaret's Council did a wonderful in hosting us all and that was most appreciated.

One of the things that I really value when I come to meetings or conventions is that there are women from many places, small and large, with different backgrounds and experiences. What an opportunity to talk together, to listen to one another, to share our experiences, good and bad. We can learn so much from one another. It is wonderful to come together as, when we do, the Lord can lead us to do things that we may not have ever imagined doing on our own. And so, we feed the hungry, help refugees, support those discerning priestly or religious vocations, and bring our Catholic point of view on issues to governments. At the same time, we develop friendships and form a sisterhood where we can support each other in our faith journeys, our family lives, in our struggles and our joys.

I hope that you find your membership in the Catholic Women's League to be rewarding as it brings you into a fellowship of faith and love, and enables you to participate in projects in support of others in your parish and the larger community. As membership season approaches, please reach out to a friend, family member, or fellow parishioner and invite them to become part of the sisterhood that is the CWL.

Jean Ashdown
Diocesan CWL President
edmontoncwl.president@gmail.com



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

November 28 at 5 pm
Gold Mass in honor of St. Albert the Great (patron saint of natural scientists) at St. Joseph's College

Dec. 15 - deadline for National Annual Survey (both electronic and paper)

Jan. 15, 2025 – deadline to submit highlights of your council's year for 2024 to Diocesan Vice-President, Lara Bechtel

January 25 & February 1
Regional Midwinter Workshops
locations to be determined

Sat. May 3 & Sun. May 4
Edmonton Diocesan Convention
Polish Hall, Edmonton

June 6 & 7
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial
Convention, Grande Prairie

August 10 to 13
CWL National Convention
in Toronto

Check out the National CWL Events Calendar at www.cwl.ca/events/

Annual Reporting

Information on completing the 2024 Annual Report Survey from National was recently sent to all council presidents. The survey is due no later than Dec. 15th (electronic or paper). It is important that all councils complete this survey and submit it within this time frame. As Betty Colanari, National Vice-President states: 'Your answers help to tell the story of the League in 2024. Without you, the story would be incomplete.' Many council executives find it is helpful to get together to answer the survey questions.

Besides completing National's Annual Report Survey, we ask that you submit a brief summary of the highlights of your council's activities for 2024 as National's survey may not capture all that your council has done. This one- or two-page summary should be submitted by January 15, 2025 to Lara Bechtel, Vice-President (edmontoncwl.vicepresident@gmail.com).

Spiritual Advisor's Message

Over the past year and a bit, I have had the opportunity to be involved, at the diocesan level, with the CWL Councils of the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton. During this time, it has always been a joyful experience to come together for Conventions, Workshops, and Meetings with members from the parishes across our Archdiocese.

This joy, I believe, comes from the fact that members of the CWL share in the faith, in their love for their communities, and in their common loving concern for their friends and family members

Currently as Pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Innisfail, it is also my joy to work with the local Parish CWL Council. I am privileged to share in ministry with them, to witness their faithfulness and generosity, and to be inspired by their constant willingness to serve and be involved. Our CWL members are truly at the core of parish life, and for this we give thanks.

This Fall, our Archdiocese is celebrating, in all of our parishes, the launch of our Archbishop's three new Pastoral Priorities: Formation for Eucharistic Worship, Formation for Confident Witness, and Formation for Service to Marriage & Family. To focus in on building up these three areas, I believe, is well worthwhile.

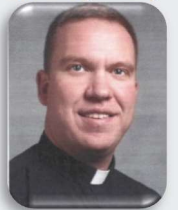
These priorities arise out of the concerns voiced by so many members of the local church throughout the Synodal Process, and they truly are directed towards building up the Church in many ways at the local level.

I am confident that every parish will find unique and creative ways to bring them to life in service to Church and every Christian Disciple. And I have no doubt as well that CWL members, across the parishes of our Archdiocese, will be involved in their implementation.

Please know that I am willing to support the efforts of our Archdiocesan Councils and Members in any way that I can, and please know as well that I keep you constantly in my prayer.

May God bless you,

Fr. Curtis Berube
Archdiocesan Spiritual Advisor



Advice From Spiritual Advisors

At the National Convention, Bishop Lobsinger, National Spiritual Advisor, met with the spiritual advisors who attended. The spiritual advisors had three pieces of advice for councils: 1) find a single focus that will help women understand what we do; 2) strengthen the spiritual side, don't let it be forgotten; and 3) look at the best ways to come together for the most people instead of trying to be everything for everyone.

Bishop Lobsinger also encouraged councils to ensure that we formally install our new spiritual advisors and, when we invite them to come to our meetings, that they are coming for a purpose, not just to sit through the meeting. This could be leading prayer or speaking on a spiritual topic. Recognizing your spiritual advisor's special days such as their birthday and anniversary of ordination are also important ways of connecting with your spiritual advisor.

Fall Meeting Summary

The meeting was held at St. Margaret's Church in Rimbey and was attended by 99 women with representatives from 32 councils. Dates for the 2025 Diocesan Convention were announced. The convention will be held on May 3rd and 4th at the Polish Hall in Edmonton. We hope that holding the convention on a Saturday and Sunday will enable more working women to attend. Mary Molloy has been appointed as the Convention Chair and councils in the west part of the Edmonton-Jasper region are helping with hosting the convention. The Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council has decided to offer to host the 2028 National Convention in Edmonton. If this is accepted by National, there will be requests for volunteers to help with the planning of this Convention.



A new Treasurer has been appointed. Daphne Cheel from Wetaskiwin will take over in November. When looking at the financial reports, there was a question about the large amount of money that has built up in our accounts. Councils are invited to submit suggestions for what we should do with some of this money. The proposed budgets for our General Account and for our Convention Account were accepted.

Our Vice-President, Lara Bechtel, is working on planning the Midwinter Regional Workshops to be held January 25th or February 1st. Contact Lara if you have suggestions for the workshops or if you would like to host one of the workshops.

Past President, Clover Oryschak, is organizing the updating of our councils' history book "We Remember...A Celebration of Service". With the help of each council, a second volume will cover our councils' activities for the period of 2000-2024.

We held a session on Rosary Making led by Catherine McNiff who was assisted by many volunteers. The rosaries will be donated to Deacon Eddie for his prison ministry work.

Alana LaPerle spoke on the Archdiocese of Edmonton's Hope & Dignity initiative which is to counter euthanasia and assisted suicide from a Catholic perspective. A website (<https://hopeanddignity.caedm.ca>) has been created and offers many resources. The Archdiocese is also offering courses on-line and in parishes so Catholics become educated on what a 'good death' looks like. The creation of 'Compassionate Parishes' is being encouraged. Those coming to parishes with various struggles would be able to easily get information about the supports that are available to them in the parish or the community.



Clover Oryschak, Past President, facilitated small group discussions about how the Diocesan Council of the CWL should respond to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Priorities of Eucharistic Worship, Confident Witnesses, and Service to Families and Marriage. Ideas were captured and will be compiled and reviewed by the Diocesan officers.

The mass collection was \$1,005.55 and it will be donated to Our Lady of Victory Camp.

Fall Meeting - Rosary Making



At the fall meeting in Rimbey we made over 100 rosaries that will be donated to Deacon Eddie's prison ministry at the Remand Centre in Red Deer.

Catherine McNiff and her team of rosary makers came to teach everyone how to make a rosary for this cause. We hope by this teaching, ladies will take this information back to their councils and make rosaries in their communities. Catherine and her team teach local school children how to make them. They also can be sent to prisons, counties in need, churches, shrines and first communion children. There are many associations that will take and distribute

rosaries, one in particular is Totus Tuus Rosary Makers Association in Calgary, AB.

To get instructions on how to make rosaries, you can go to www.olrm.org/how-to-make-a-rosary. This site (Our Lady's Rosary Makers) gives you step by step instructions on how to make corded and wire rosaries. To order supplies, you can order off of the Our Lady's Rosary Makers site by going to the following link www.rosarymakingparts.com. From there you can order different beads, cords and crosses for your rosaries.

If you have any questions for Catherine McNiff and her rosary making team, please feel free to contact her at catherineofs@gmail.com



Deacon Eddie Lavoie, Our Lady of Assumption in Sylvan Lake, accepting the rosaries made at the Fall Meeting from Sylvan Lake Vice-President Viviana Dal Cengio and Catherine McNiff (Lara Bechtel at the podium)

History Project

An update of our council's history book "We Remember...A Celebration of Service" is being planned. With the help of each council, a second volume will cover our councils' activities for the past 25 years (2000-2024). So, start thinking about what you will include. Clover Oryschak, Past-President, is forming a committee and will be in touch soon with instructions on what will be required from the councils.

Edmonton Diocesan Treasurer – Daphne Cheel



I'm honoured to have been asked by our Diocesan President, Jean Ashdown, to take on the role of Diocesan Treasurer. I have a difficult task in following Mariette Hout in this role – she has done a truly tremendous job in this position over the last 5 years!

I joined the Sacred Heart Wetaskiwin CWL in 2011; and am currently finishing up my term as President of our Council. I have also been active within the Sacred Heart parish community – I have served on the parish pastoral council, finance committee, refugee sponsorship committee, youth ministry advisory committee and am currently active in many liturgical ministries.

I've been married to my husband Ken for 44 years; have two amazing daughters (and two wonderful sons-in-law); and have 4 beautiful grandchildren. I retired in 2017 (sort of) from a career that spanned 35 years working in science, research and government. The research portion of my career focused on applied environmental research – in the areas of landscape dynamics, resource management decision support systems, and corporate environmental risk management. The government portion of my career spanned many domains – from health to oil sands, and a number of different ministry portfolios – such as, science, resource management and economic development, with an emphasis on systems, strategy, policy and performance.

Since “retiring”, I have been continuing my life-long learning journey by exploring new skills (painting, quilting); deepening my understanding of our faith; and travelling to new destinations.

Parish Buddy for Councils in the St. Albert-Lloyd Region:

- Vermilion Holy Name of Jesus
- Villeneuve St. Peter
- Edmonton St. Alphonsus
- Edmonton St. Charles
- Edmonton St. Clare
- Edmonton St. Dominic Savio
- Edmonton St. Edmund
- Edmonton St. John Bosco

Bring Confident Witnesses to Your Council

Are you looking for an idea for a faith activity for your council? Consider using either the Diocesan “Women of the Bible” or the “Women Saints” quilt as presentation to highlight the roots of our faith. Both of these are available to be booked by local councils for use and come with descriptions and talking points. As well, the “Women of the Bible” quilt comes with a prayer service that can be adapted as required as well as a PowerPoint presentation that can be.



For more information,
please contact Celina at
edmontoncwl.faith@gmail.com



Social Justice

Monitoring Legislation

All members are encouraged to monitor information arising from legislative debates, reach out to their MP with their concerns, take part in education opportunities, and consider developing a resolution. Some current legislation to monitor:

- **Bill S-210 Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act** is at its third reading. The bill requires Internet service providers to provide age verification filters that block access to pornography by children and youth.
- **Bill C-63 An Act to enact the Online Harms Act**, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act and An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts. Is currently at its second reading.
- **Bill C-62 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying) No. 2** delayed the planned expansion of medical assistance in dying (MAiD) to those with mental illnesses only.

Resolutions Committee

A committee is being formed to review resolutions that are submitted to Diocesan council for consideration at our next annual meeting. Volunteers were requested and, so far, 8 members have responded with interest. Evelyn Dunne, Social Justice Chairperson, will be organizing the meetings. So far one resolution has been submitted. The deadline for submission of resolutions is Dec. 31st.

Red Sand Awareness Campaign (IWIN Initiative)

The Red Sand Prayer Service is a human trafficking awareness campaign supported by IWIN (I'm Worth It Now). Participants read aloud a short prayer service and then fill sidewalk cracks with red sand, creating sidewalk art. The red sand symbolizes that we cannot walk over the most marginalized people in our communities – those who fall through the metaphoric cracks. To IWIN, the red sand also represents Jesus' blood poured out for all of God's children.

Evelyn Dunne, Social Justice Chairperson, has the Prayer Service and red sand. Please contact her (edmontoncwl.socialjustice@gmail.com) if your council wishes to take part in this awareness campaign.



Resolutions

Is your council working on a resolution? If so, let Evelyn Dunne, our Social Justice Chair, know about it. There may be others who could help with it and, by sharing what you are working on, we can ensure that we do not have multiple councils working on similar resolutions. Each resolution must be voted on and adopted by your council and then submitted to Evelyn Dunne (edmontoncwl.socialjustice@gmail.com) no later than Dec. 31st. This allows time for our Resolutions Committee to review it and make sure it is ready to be brought forward to the next Convention.



Faith

I am always in awe of how busy we are all are in our councils, whether it through practical acts of service or vocal advocacy for social justice. In comparison, my plate seems so empty until I remember that Faith permeates everything we do. And it means more than just remembering to take time to sit at our Master's feet and listen to what He says. We must remember to make sure we make time in all of our activities for intentional prayer or worship. The challenge is in finding ways to make sure that it is more than just a line item on the agenda but something that is meaningful.

With that in mind, I remind us all of the upcoming Jubilee Year and the opportunity to truly celebrate our Faith. The CCCB has created some Reflection Activities exploring the Jubilee theme of Hope. This, and other information can be found at <https://www.cccb.ca/evangelization-catechesis-catholic-education/the-ordinary-jubilee-of-the-year-2025/>

I want to thank all the councils that have adopted a seminarian (or two or three!). We have been blessed with a such a large number of seminarians this year and it is important that they feel our love and encouragement. You can check out the full list at <https://stjoseph-seminary.com/current-seminarians/>. Please continue to support and pray for them as they continue their vocational journey.



Celina Curtis

edmontoncwl.faith@gmail.com

Jubilee 2025 News



In celebration of the upcoming Jubilee, and a novel approach to evangelization, the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelization has released a mascot for the 2025 Jubilee Year. Luce, which means "light" in Italian, and her friends Fe, Xin, Sky, are cheerful characters created as a way to engage fans of and pop culture

The character has been artfully created and is chock full of symbolism. Luce is dressed as a pilgrim on the Camino de Santiago, keeping with the Jubilee theme of "Pilgrims of Hope," using the symbol of the ancient pilgrimage for her eyes, as well as muddy boots, walking staff and yellow rain coat to show her journey.



As well as her friends representing the international character of Catholicism, she is accompanied by her dog Santino, a symbol of friendship, a dove named Aura, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, and a guardian angel wearing a cap with an anchor as a symbol of hope. The rosary she carries around her neck has the colours of the World Mission Rosary (<https://missionsla.org/wmr>).



As a mascot, she is giving the Vatican the opportunity to spread the word of the Jubilee Year in unorthodox venues such as an Italian Comic-Con, the first time the Vatican has participated in such an event. She will also appear at the World Expo in Japan next year and has already made the rounds in whimsical pop art in social media such as Tumbler. In fact, she has sparked an awareness of the Jubilee Year in spaces that normally would not report on Catholic news, like secular media such as Forbes as well as in pop cultural spaces like Screen Rant.



For more information, you can read the Catholic News Agency article at <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/260129/meet-luce-the-vatican-s-cartoon-mascot-for-jubilee-2025> and at the creator's website at <https://www.tokidoki.it/blogs/collabs-projects/luce>.



Service

Our Lady of Victory Camp

I have received many expressions of gratitude from the Advisory Committee members to our Diocesan CWL for our continued support and donations in helping to keep the camp and its facilities afloat and thriving. They are especially grateful for our most recent donation given by our Mass Collection at the Fall Meeting. They had experienced some issues within their facilities last summer and hope to all the restorations by the coming summer, in time to welcome more youth than the previous year.

Refugee Welcome Bag Program

This fall season, we received a generous amount of donation items for the refugee welcome bags. Just as the kind CWL donations from the Fall Meeting were being received at St. Joseph's Basilica, more welcome bags for the refugees were delivered to the reception house. One important item to make note of is that the St. Joseph's Basilica CWL council undertook the Refugee Welcome Bag project in 2019 and will be stepping down by June 2025 to allow another council to coordinate the project. Please let me know if your council is interested in coordinating this project.

Feeding the Hungry Project

Many councils have expressed their enjoyment when partaking in feeding the hungry in Edmonton on the 1st and 5th Saturday of the month at Sacred Heart Parish of the First Peoples. The schedule for 2025 was opened for sign-ups at the Fall Meeting. A few councils have already signed up, but there are still many dates available. Please contact Nicole at edmontoncwl.service@gmail.com if your council is interested in taking part in Feed the Hungry.



Nicole Favis

Feed the Hungry (Edmonton)

Organized by a community organization and taking place at Sacred Heart Parish of the First Peoples, the Feed the Hungry Project in Edmonton is supported by Edmonton Diocesan CWL members by helping to serve lunch and distribute food donations on the 1st and 5th Saturday of the month.

The schedule for 2025 still has slots available.

Please contact Nicole at edmontoncwl.service@gmail.com if your council is interested in helping out.



Provincial Convention 2024

This year at the provincial convention in Calgary, we focused on our national theme “Here I am Lord, Send Me”. Shari Guinta, our National President, spoke on this theme that she created. Shari stated that if we listen to the Holy Spirit, we will hear his voice.

Following Shari’s presentation, Dr. Monique Withers spoke on palliative care and our collective call. Archbishop Richard Smith, presented on encountering Christ on our faith journey and our response. Our approach to human life is stewardship not ownership. How do we bridge the gap? Be a united people and be OK with change.

I attended 2 different workshops. The first one was on mentorship. We discussed the importance of educating our councils on what we do within our councils as many members do not know. The second workshop was called the Holy Spirit is Listening where we learnt about the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and how to listen internally within ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

We had the wonderful opportunity to give a life membership to Gwen Elliott from St. Francis Xavier in Camrose, AB.

Bishop William McGrattan discussed living a life of intentional discipleship and how it relates to our national theme. Our last speaker to speak at the convention was Cam Cote. He is the Western Outreach Director for the Centre for Bioethical Reform and spoke on sharing the pro-life message.

It was great to meet many new members as well as get to know our many presidents throughout the province. I encourage all of you to attend a provincial convention as you get you know about our CWL on a different level, meet new people and learn new things to bring back to your councils. I look forward to the next provincial convention that will be held in Grande Prairie in 2025. And I hope to see you all there.

Lara Bechtel
Diocesan CWL Vice President
edmontoncwl.vicepresident@gmail.com



New Life Member for Edmonton Diocesan Council

Our newest Life Member in the Edmonton Diocese is Gwen Elliott. Gwen has been a CWL member for 46 years in Edson, Killam, and now Camrose. She served on Diocesan Council for 12 years and was President from 2013-2015. She was the Treasurer for five years for the Alberta-Mackenzie Provincial Council. She has served as registration chairperson for two conventions and was co-chair of our Diocesan Convention in 2022. Her musical leadership has graced many meetings and conventions. She is very active in CWL activities as well as parish activities.

Gwen received her Life Membership at the ABMK Provincial Convention this past June in Calgary when National President Shari Guinta presented her with the Life Member pin. In August, she was also recognized with other new Life Members at the National Convention in Saskatoon. Gwen is eager to share her knowledge of the League and to help out at all levels of the League.



Learning and fun at the National Convention in Saskatoon

A total of four Diocesan officers attended the National Convention in Saskatoon August 14-18: Jean Ashdown and Lara Bechtel as Edmonton Diocesan's Accredited Delegates, and also Clover Oryschak and Celina Curtis.

The Convention began with the Resolution Dialogue on Sunday afternoon with three resolutions for review. In the evening, the opening mass was held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family followed by a wine and cheese reception.

Monday and Tuesday began with a mass at the convention centre followed by presentations and workshops – 2 full days of learning! We heard about 'Walking Together in Synodality' (Bishop Lobsinger and Barb Dowding), 'Doctrine of Discovery' (Archbishop Bolen & Deacon Harry Lafond), and 'Here I Am Lord, Send Me' (Leah Perrault). On Tuesday, as well as numerous break out sessions with a variety of topics, we listened to presentations from organizations that National encourages that we support: Coady Institute, Development and Peace, Catholic Missions in Canada, and the Near East Welfare Association. We had a memorial service for deceased members and the new Life Members (including our own Gwen Elliott) were welcomed.

Wednesday began with Morning Prayer and was the day for the Annual Meeting of Members. There were reports given, an update of the Strategic Plan, and voting on the resolutions, all of which were adopted. The day and the Convention ended with the closing Mass at Holy Spirit church and the Gala Banquet.

As well as workshops, presentations, and the annual meeting, all in attendance enjoyed beautiful masses and spiritual programs as well as the numerous social events that were lots of fun. These included a beautiful Filipino supper with great entertainment and a pirate themed supper and dance.

The fall issue of The Canadian League magazine has more details about the convention including the resolutions that were adopted.



Share the Words

Share the Words 52 Reasons to Talk About the CWL

Training Reference #329

<https://www.cwl.ca/training-reference-guide-promotion>