Edmonton Diocesan CWL

Issue Fall 2025

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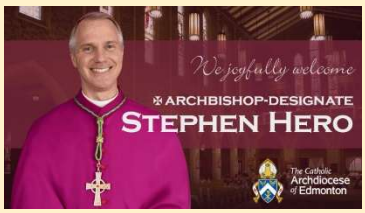
Mission Statement

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

New Archbishop of Edmonton Named

We were excited to hear the news that Bishop Stephen Hero had been appointed by Pope Leo XIV as the new Archbishop of Edmonton. We welcome him back to Edmonton and look forward to his installation on January 23rd. We hope to have him join us at our Convention in April.



Upcoming Deadlines & Events

December 31, 2025 - deadline for nomination for Elsie Yanik Nomination (Form Can Be Found Here)

January 15, 2026 – deadline for submission of National Annual Report Survey

Midwinter Regional Workshops:

- January 31, 2026 - St. Albert-Lloydminster Region: St. Dominic Savio – Edmonton
- January 31, 2026 - Red Deer Region: St. Anthony - Didsbury
- February 7, 2026 - Edmonton-Provost Region: St. Vital – Beaumont
- February 7, 2026 - Edmonton-Jasper Region: Sacred Heart – Edson

February 28, 2026 – deadline for submissions for Walter Krewski Awards for most new members (Form Can Be Found Here)

April 17 & 18, 2026 – Edmonton Diocesan Convention, Holy Family Parish, St. Albert

ABMK Provincial - June 5-6, 2026 - St. Joseph's, Whitecourt AB

National Convention - August 9-12, 2026 - Halifax NS

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

In high school, I was not interested in taking Social Studies. I found history boring and took Social 20 only because the teacher was particularly good. It has only been as an adult when I became interested in genealogy, and, more recently, began reading historical fiction, that I have gained a better understanding of some historical events. Seeing the effects certain events had on my own family makes it easier to understand those world events in the sense of the real impacts they had on people's lives. In November, we have several days to remind us of those who have died – All Saint's Day, All Soul's Day, Remembrance Day and Red Wednesday. Remembering those who were martyred for their faith and those who died in wars, makes me feel angry that things like wars, persecutions, hatred, greed, and a general disregard for human life continue. How do we not learn from the past? Sometimes I avoid watching the news so I don't have to see the things that disturb me. Yet, I do continue to have hope. Hope in the Lord, hope in the goodness of one another, hope in our governments. As we enter into Advent, we remember with hope the love of God in sending his Son, Jesus, to be born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. Jesus who redeems us and makes a place for us in heaven, who comes to us now humbly through bread and wine to give us his Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. While we must continue to pray for peace, for justice, for love to help overcome the terrible things around us, we must look for the beauty and goodness that surrounds us especially in our families, friends, and communities. We must work to overcome evil by spreading the love of God to all we encounter through our service. And we must hope that love will help to bring about peace on earth.

Wishing you much love, peace and hope in the coming Advent and Christmas seasons.

Jean

Donation to No Stone Left Alone

The Edmonton Diocesan Council and the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council used to participate in laying a wreath on behalf of the CWL at the Remembrance Day ceremony held at the Butterdome at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. This ceremony stopped being held during the pandemic and has not restarted. As such, we began to make a $100 donation to 'No Stone Left Alone' charity. This charity's mission is "to honour the service and sacrifice of Canada's military by educating and inspiring youth to place poppies on veterans' headstones". The founder is an Edmonton woman, Maureen Bianchini Purvis, who would remember her mother, a veteran, each year by placing a poppy on her grave but was challenged by her children who wondered why other veterans did not also get poppies. Learn more about this charity on their website: https://www.nostoneleftalone.ca/

No Stone Left Alone®
Memorial Foundation
La Fondation commémorative
Aucune Pierre Dans L'Oubli

Mark Your Calendars!

Monthly Zoom Session - How Does Your Council...?

Next meeting - January 26 at 7pm

January's topic:

How Does Your Council engage with your spiritual advisor?

Please watch your emails for the Zoom link and invite.

If you have any suggestions or monthly topics, please let Lara know at edmontoncwl.vicepresident@gmail.com

2025 Diocesan Fall Meeting

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Wetaskiwin, AB

The Edmonton CWL Diocesan Fall meeting was held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Wetaskiwin on September 27, 2025. With the theme “In the One, we are one,” time was put aside for us to appreciate all facets of our CWL lives.

Starting with both mass and time for Eucharistic Adoration, led by Diocesan Spiritual Advisor Fr. Curtis Berube, we were able to set the tone for a day of business and education.

The first main speaker was Lorraine Turchansky, representing the Society of St. Vincent De Paul, who was able to highlight not only what the Society does in the Edmonton region, but also how the money we recently donated will be used. She was also able to tell us about the other fundraising activities held by the Society, including their shop in the city which allows them to sell the more valuable household items donated to them.

Unfortunately, our afternoon speaker had to cancel at the last minute, but in keeping with our support of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on Sept. 30th (which we also showed with a sea of orange), Jean Ashdown showed a video from CBC on Pow Wows.

Our last speaker was Cathy Bouchard, representing ABMK Provincial Council with information on the R3 to 1 Unity project. Asking the question “Why did you join the Catholic Women’s League,” she challenged us to see why we joined as a way to help invite other women to join us.

Between speakers, we held our semi-annual business meeting, with motions regarding the name and focus for the award for Women’s Faith Formation, paying for the Chrism Mass reception, covering the costs of history books, and our ongoing support for the Refugee Welcome Bag Program in Edmonton.

One of the final activities was the presentation of the ABMK Increase in Membership Certificates to numerous councils. Congratulations ladies in helping grow the CWL in our dioceses.

Through out the day, conversation and socialization were had by all, whether around the tables or at the various Diocesan Officer displays.

Edmonton Diocesan Updates

Table at Women of Dignity Conference

At the Women of Dignity Women's Conference held at Holy Family parish in St. Albert on Oct. 17 & 18, the Diocesan Officers set up an information table about the Catholic Women's League. Information was provided showcasing some activities that parish councils do, examples of the resolutions that have been adopted at a National level and the work of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations which all CWL members belong to as well. We talked to many of those attending the conference, some already CWL members but others who were not. Several of those attending wanted to know more about CWL and membership. Councils at the parish they attend have been notified of their interest.

Refugee Welcome Bags

We are happy to announce that the coordination of the Refugee Welcome Bag Project will now be done by St. Thomas More CWL council. The needed items will remain at a storage area at St. Joseph's Basilica and volunteers will go there on the last week of the month to put together the items. If you have members who might be interested in either coming to see what is done or in helping out once a month, please contact Jean at ashdownj@telus.net. If you are interested in doing a collection of items for the refugee bags, first contact Jean to find out which items are most needed and also to arrange a time to drop off the items. Many thanks to all the councils who brought donations to the Diocesan Fall Meeting or dropped off items this fall. Special thanks to the members of St. Joseph's Basilica CWL council who coordinated this project for the past 6 years.

The Katherine Hughes CWL Award

This new award has now been set up with the Foundation of St. Joseph Seminary and Newman Theological College with an initial amount of $12,500 which should yield a $500 award. It is to be given to a woman from the Archdiocese of Edmonton studying at Newman College who has been dedicated and involved in service to the Catholic community, preferably with the Catholic Women's League. The award is being named after Katherine Hughes who was the founder of the Catholic Women's League of Edmonton in 1912, the first CWL in all of Canada. To find out more information about Katherine Hughes, a teacher, journalist, public servant, author, and Irish political activist, go to our website History

Check out the many resources found at www.cwl.ca

All you need is your member number to access resources created by your sisters in the League.

St. Charles CWL, Mearns, 75th Anniversary

Diocesan President Jean Ashdown presented service pins at the 75th Anniversary celebration at St. Charles, Mearns, with Faith Chase, President.

Corpus Christi CWL, Edmonton 10th Anniversary

Diocesan President Jean Ashdown with members of the Corpus Christi, Edmonton, CWL Council

Francine Bukkems 100th Birthday

Sacred Heart CWL, Wetaskiwin, member Francine Bukkems celebrated her 100th birthday and received a special blessing from Fr. Roger.

Election of New School Trustees

Thank you to all of our members who let their names stand in the recent election of Catholic school trustees. It is so important to have strong Catholic women be trustees for our Catholic school divisions. Please keep those who were elected in your prayers as they work for the good of our Catholic schools over the next four years.

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje by our CWL sisters

Deacon Bong - St. Charles, Edmonton AB, Tina Casella - St. Charles, Edmonton AB, Jennifer McAdam - Holy Trinity, Spruce Grove AB,Marie Wenger - St. Thomas Moore, Edmonton AB, Katherine Tarras - President, St. Charles, Edmonton AB, Rhoda Estoque - St. Charles, Edmonton AB, Cora Trompetter - St. Charles, Edmonton AB, Lorraine Trudel - St. Charles, Edmonton AB, Madeleine Yasinski - Assumption Parish, St. Walburg, SK, Father Paul Moret - Holy Trinity, Spruce Grove AB.
Photo was taken at a Chaple in Medjugorje the 15th of October 2025

St. Stephen CWL, Olds, 100th Anniversary

On October 5, 2025, the St. Stephen's CWL of Olds, Alberta celebrated their 100-year anniversary.

As people gathered, Jim and Charlene Schramm provided background music and a slide presentation scrolled through pictures from past generations to current. All the pictures gathered in the archives were on display.

Following the welcome and acknowledgements by Archdiocesan President Jean Ashdown, Town of Olds Mayor Judy Dahl, Parish Pastoral Council Chair Paul Groenewegen, Knights of Columbus Grand Knight David Dicknoether and Pastor Fr. Alex Joseph, the 75 people in attendance shared memories and visited over a wonderful meal.

Following supper, Past President Judy Wahlstrom reflected on the past, present and future of CWL in Olds. Guests were then highly entertained with the presentation of a "Bake Sale Meeting" depicting former members Ruthen Stokes (portrayed by Sandra Boutwell), Betty Adamcik (portrayed by Laurel Arvay), Marj Fagan (portrayed by Charlene Schramm) and Josephine Benedek (portrayed by Kathy Kemmere). As we sat around the tables, years slipped away remembering all we have done and we look forward to all we will do in the future.

Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation

The Leadership Program is developed to accommodate women who may be working full time. It is based on adult learning principles and is women centered. The program features numerous networking opportunities and a mentorship plan designed to strengthen each woman's ability to grow. After completing the Program, women will have the skills they need, whether they are speaking on behalf of an organization, fundraising for a local community group, making decisions that affect the health and well-being of people or serving as a director of a major organization or a government agency.

This Program provides an excellent opportunity for Canadian Catholic women from all walks of life, who are committed to making a difference in society, by developing their leadership skills.

Applications will be open shortly for the 2026-2027 cohort of the Catholic Women Leadership Program. The deadline for applications is December 15, 2025.

For more information, please visit:
www.cwlfcanada.ca/about

Members of the 2025 -2026 cohort - Lara Bechtel (Edmonton Diocesan V.P.), Jessie Parkinson (National Social Justice Chair), Iris Nulty, and Mary Ann Dayagbil (Gerard McLellan VP)

Resolutions Dialogue

The four national resolutions that were passed and will be brought forward to the federal government are:

- 2025.01 Federal Government to Create a Unified and Centralized Cybercrime Reporting System for Canadians
- 2025.02 Amend the Canadian Criminal Code Section 223(1) Defining When a Child Becomes a Human Being
- 2025.03 Strengthen Support for Chaplains to Provide Faith-Based Care to Members and Families of the Canadian Armed Forces
- 2025.04 Federal Government to Further Develop the Office of Palliative Care

The three provincial resolutions that were passed for action at the provincial level are:

- 2025.04 Conscience Rights for Healthcare Workers and Providers
- 2025.05 Planned Parenthood Resources on Alberta Government and AHS (its successor health organizations) supported Websites
- 2025.06 Increased and Equitable Support for Grandparents raising Grandchildren

Provincial Resolutions 2025.01 to 2025.03 were adopted and submitted to National Resolutions Subcommittee. 2025.02 was adopted at the National level. 2025.01 and 2025.03 were returned and will be worked on by the ABMK Resolutions Subcommittee to make changes as suggested.

Each resolution is worthy of advocacy and we are called to act! Our challenge is not to become overwhelmed but instead have a strategy. To start, choose one resolution to act on. Consider "What is your diocesan or parish council already planning? What is your focus for 2026? Which resolution aligns with your member's interests and your council's resources and goals?".

Ask your Social Justice Chair to work together with your Faith and Service Chairs. Engage your members by facilitating a discussion at a meeting or presenting an educational workshop. Be confident and proud of the work you do and your successes. At one time we would sign and send form letters presented to us but that has changed. It is preferable for our members of government to receive letters that are handwritten. When form letters are received, they are passed aside but when a handwritten letter is received, it is more likely to be read. Please refer to the Letter Writing Guide available on the National website.

Did You Know...

As a CWL member you are also a member of WUCWO (World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations)

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) is a global network of Catholic organizations whose mission is the evangelization and integral development of women.

For more than 110 years, we have been working to promote the active and co-responsible participation of Catholic women in the Church and in society, so that they may fulfil their evangelizing mission and contribute to human development.

To learn more please check out the following website: www.wucwo.org

World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations

IT'S ELECTION TIME!

Leadership roles in the Edmonton Diocesan CWL Council

President – Represents the Diocesan Council, chairs all Diocesan Executive meetings and Edmonton Diocesan Officer meetings, sits on ABMK Provincial Executive, voting delegate at ABMK Provincial Convention, accredited delegate at CWL National Convention, signing authority, appoints all diocesan committee members. Assumes position of Past President at end of term

Vice President – Oversees membership, organizes regional mid-winter workshops, attends ABMK Provincial Executive meetings with the President, assists struggling councils, parish buddy program, signing authority, custodian of the Diocesan Council banners and flags. VP must be elected (cannot be appointed), assumes position of President at end of term

Secretary – Keeps president roster up to date, minutes for all Diocesan Executive and Diocesan Officer meetings, helps update election eligibility list, mails out communications to parish councils, oversees Diocesan webmaster, coordinates production of Diocesan newsletters

Treasurer – Responsible for keeping the financial books for Diocesan Council, signing authority, chairs the Diocesan Finance Committee that prepares the annual budget, makes sure all Diocesan Council expenses are paid

Past President – Serves in an advisory capacity to the President, looks after Diocesan Council archives and history, chairs the Diocesan Election and Nomination Committee, chairs the Diocesan Policy Committee, special projects as requested by the President

Standing Committee Chairs: (within the Edmonton Diocesan Council)

Faith – Organizes the Adopt a Seminarian Program, custodian of the Diocesan Council quilts, oversees Diocesan liturgical ceremonies part of Diocesan Executive meetings and convention, plans Diocesan faith retreats, and disseminates spiritual development information to members

Service – Organizes Diocesan Council projects (e.g. Feed the Hungry, CWL involvement in OLVC work bees, Refugee Welcome Bag project, Diocesan Book project, etc.) and helps recruit volunteers

Social Justice – Chairs the Diocesan Resolutions Committee, liaison with IWIN, works with Diocesan Service to develop projects related to specific causes, liaison with Catholic Social Services, and disseminates educational information about social issues to all members

Congratulations to all the councils who increased membership in 2024

(We have so many that we had to make the photos small!)

(Please note that some councils were not available for photos)