



UNITED CHURCH WOMEN of Western Ontario Waterways Region

Dear UCW Friends:

December 2019

*Firstly you are encouraged to share any or all of the following newsletter as you wish;
no further permissions are required.*

WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER!

This year has been one of excitement and change within our UCW. The restructuring of our national church has made this an advantageous time for us to restructure as well. As you may already know, parts of Toronto, Hamilton and London conferences' UCWs have already come together to create UCW WOW. The Huron Perth UCWs have chosen to maintain their presbyterials until spring of 2020.

Early in the year a Transition Leadership Team of passionate UCW members from the previous presbyterials came together to work on your behalf to plan for our future. Much conversation and dreaming has been happening about this. Please see the separate contact list for who is working for you and direct any ideas to them at the email provided.

If you joined us for our first **CELEBRATION** on Sat. Sept. 21 in Mount Forest you would have sensed the excitement and passion of United Church Women coming together for the first time in our new region. National UCW President Beulah Hayley from Newfoundland was our guest speaker. Over 150 women (and a few men) joined us for the day, to worship, sing, feast and dream. It was an 'awesome' day and the feedback indicates a similar event would be welcome in the spring. We will have an Annual General Celebration (AGC) on Saturday, May 2 at a location to be confirmed soon. Please mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details.

There are several things that must happen at an annual gathering. As your steering committee is made up of volunteers, we shall need to formally elect an Executive to lead us from May 2020 on. More about that in 2020.

One of the perks of being on the leadership team of a region is the opportunity for two to attend the annual National UCW event in September held in Mississauga. It is a great gathering, a time to reconnect as well as meet new UCW ladies and to discuss common interests and concerns. This is a 5-day event full of activities, discussions, interesting guest speakers, decision-making, worship, food, fun and fellowship.

There are now 16 regions across Canada, but only 5 have extended an invitation to the UCW to have a voting representative on their regional councils. One of the issues of great concern to many of you is the matter of the UCW not having a vote on the WOW Regional Council. Your steering committee is in the process of trying to decide how our WOW UCW can support women within the United Church, even if they are not currently members of a local unit, and how we can best ensure that women in our national church have a strong voice and presence in each region. More on that to come as we consider the issues. It is interesting to note that

prior to our UCC reorganization in January 2019, the National President of UCW had a non-voting seat at the General Council Executive but now doesn't even have that!!

Below is information for sharing with your UCW units, congregations and church boards: Earlier this year a national UCW survey was conducted to ascertain the contributions that identified members of the United Church Women make to the national church, their communities and to their local congregations. The results of this survey are quite amazing.

- The survey identified 1,026 known UCW units across Canada with a membership of 17,280 women
- Of those 1,026 Units, 601 replied to the survey which is a response of 58%
- In 2018 the UCW contributed \$1,133,000 to the Mission and Service fund
- UCW gave \$2,312,489 for the maintenance and ministry of their own local churches
- UCW contributed \$795,907 to local community outreach
- 3,962 UCW members were reported as serving on boards and committees in their congregations
- 112 have trained and are serving the wider church as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

These figures do not include the hours given to visiting, the sending of cards on behalf of the congregation, donations of clothing, personal hygiene and food items for local homeless shelters and food banks, and many of the other things that the women of our churches participate in. Be proud of these statistics and brag about them whenever you can.

Your UCW WOW Team is working hard on creating a comprehensive communications network. We are particularly hopeful of having contacts in each UCW unit who has access to email and internet, for timely and cost-efficient communications. It is vital that your UCW unit return the stats form-contact list distributed in early December as soon as you can. Early in the new year, we hope to distribute the assessment information for each unit.

As UCW President of Pacific Mountain Clare Walker wrote "you have some good stuff to share with your units and I hope this helps you realize what a very special part of our church that you all are and I wish to thank all the Units ... who responded to the survey. NOW... keep in mind that all these figures relate to "**Service**" which is, after all, the 4th pillar of our purpose and not the first.

Christian Witness – going to church on Sunday and learning the names of the children in the church school and speaking to them; **Study** – listening well to the sermon and giving it some careful thought, re-reading the lectionary reading for the day and giving it some more thought at home before you take your Sunday afternoon nap; & of course **Fellowship** – the very best part of being a UCW member, phone calls to those who can't get out, a little note written on pretty paper and either delivered or mailed, a bunch of flowers from your garden taken to a shut-in – (when the season is right). So you see you can be part of a UCW Unit even when you are no longer able to make tea at the Christmas bazaar, or serve at a funeral reception, or take your turn to read scripture during worship. Just remember that "Service" was put at the end for a reason.

More NUCW News worth sharing:

At the NUCW Gathering in September we were given an update on the plans for the 60th Anniversary gathering to be held at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in Sydney Nova Scotia, July 11-15, 2022. Theme is to be "Continuing in Hope". It is estimated that the registration fee will be in the range of \$350-\$400 which covers meals and then there will be hotel costs and travel of course on top of that. Grants of up to \$400 each, from the Agatha Kaasa and Dorothy Amos Funds are to be made available to women seeking financial assistance to attend this gathering. A special form is going to be created just for applications for grants for this event. Each region is allotted 20 delegates as space is limited. Do you think WOW UCW could fill all of its allotment? Think about going.

NUCW sent \$1,000 for relief in the Bahamas through the UCC relief fund. That island is part of the Maritime region of our national church, and has an active UCW unit there. We trust our sisters there felt our concern for their challenges following the hurricane Dorion.

After some discussion it was decided to maintain our Associate membership in the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women rather than contribute a considerably higher amount of money to become full members. This organization holds a world Convention every 5 years and the next is in Sweden in 2021. We have been experiencing some difficulty in communicating and getting answers to questions we have, so felt that in the meantime associate membership would suffice.

The "**Women for Change – Zambia**" our 60th Anniversary project, is well underway and at the time of our September meeting \$18,232 had been received and \$10,000 already sent to Zambia. An earlier email from WOW'S UCW Treasurer offered instructions about issuing cheques, designating funds, and where to send them. (*Issue cheques to UCW WOW; mail to Joyce Osborne, Treasurer UCW Western Ontario Waterways, Box 298, Ripley, ON N0G 2R0*)

"Women for Change – Zambia" has its own face-book page and good information is available through that route. There is also a power point presentation on this project available and you can get a copy by contacting Pat Whiten. If you would like a guest speaker, let someone on the UCW Team know and we'll try to make that happen for you. It would make a great study too!

The Communications committee of NUCW will be working on improvements to the UCW website and to our Facebook page. Dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the difficulty in accessing the UCW information on the national church's website.

There was discussion on what it means to be a "member" of UCW. We realized that we have a number of women who are associated with UCW who are now attending churches where there is no UCW Unit. We need to 'keep' those members, especially our Life Members who might move away from their units.

We celebrated that Nancy Risto from Niagara Falls was named President-Elect and she will be installed for a 2-year term at the September 2020 meeting. She will be our leader for the 60th anniversary celebrations!

That is perhaps enough for our first newsletter. Your feedback, suggestions and willingness to share this news is greatly appreciated. Be in touch to our email: UCW.WOW@gmail.com.