

Dear UCW Friends:

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

This past 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 (Western Ontario Waterways). Some including the Huron Perth UCWs have chosen to maintain their presbyterials until spring 2020.

Early in the year a Transition Leadership Team (TLT) 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 review the team contact list to see who is working on your behalf and direct any ideas to one of them. *Please use the email listed; a reply will follow of receipt.*

If you joined us for our first CELEBRATION on Sat. Sept. 21 at Mount Forest United Church you would have sensed the excitement and passion too. National UCW (NUCW) 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 have an Annual General Celebration (AGC) set for Sat. May 2 at a Calvary Evangelical United Church in St. Jacob's. Please mark your calendars now, and plan to join us.

There are several things that must happen at an annual gathering. We must elect a **PRESIDENT**. It is very important that we elect someone to this position at our Celebration. The President serves for 2 years and will finish off her term as Past-President for 1 year; that's only a 3-year commitment in total. Please give this your prayerful consideration and don't be shy about offering yourself if you think this is something you are called to do. You have a great team to support you already!

It would be most helpful to have someone offer to be **President-Elect** too. Of course a **Secretary** and **Treasurer** are also needed to carry on the work of the UCW Region. The work to establish these roles is well in hand already. And of course we do have a UCW Handbook to direct us.

One of the perks of being on the leadership team of a region is the opportunity for two (2) leaders to attend the National UCW event in September held in Mississauga. It is a great gathering, a time to reconnect and to 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.

One of the issues which is of great concern to many of you is the matter of the UCW not having a voting seat on the WOW Region Council. You can rest assured that this is an issue that is of great concern to many of our UCWs as, of the 16 regions, there are only 5 that have extended an invitation to the UCW to have a representative on the Regional Council. It is interesting to note that prior to our reorganization in January 2019, the National President of UCW had a non-voting seat at the General Council Executive but now since January 2019 doesn't even have that!! Your leadership team is working on this and will bring forward a recommendation on May 2, 2020.

Below is information for sharing with your UCW units, congregations and church boards:

Earlier in 2019 a **national 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 were quite amazing and it is easy to see why so often it has been said that "if it weren't for the women of the congregation and the members of the UCW this church would have closed long ago" – or words to that effect.

The survey identified 1026 known UCW units across Canada with a membership of 17,280 women. Of those 1026 Units 601 responded to the survey which is a response of 58% so the figures quoted are from those 601 units.

In 2018 the UCW contributed \$1,133,000 to the national Mission and Service fund, they gave \$2,312,489 for the maintenance and ministry of their own local churches, and contributed \$795,907 to community outreach.

As well 3,962 UCW members were reported as serving on boards and committees in their congregations, and 112 have trained and are serving the wider Church as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders.

These figures do not include the hours given to friendly visiting, the sending of cards on behalf of the congregation, donations of clothing, personal hygiene items and food items for local homeless shelters and food banks and many of the other things that the women of our churches participate in.

Your UCW WOW TLTeam is working hard on creating a comprehensive communications network. We are particularly hopeful to having contacts in each UCW unit who has access to email and internet, for timely and cost efficient communications. Thank you to all the units have returned the 2019 Stats and contact forms.

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 in our region 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. As we age and feel less able to "DO"

things we might feel we can no longer be a UCW Unit but that is definitely not the case. Remember the first 3 pillars, “Christian Witness, Study, & Fellowship”, these are the really important pillars and no matter how old we get we can still do these things pretty well I would suggest. I am really saddened when I hear of Units who use the excuse of “we are getting old and can’t do what we used to, so we think we are going to fold our UCW Unit”. Please don’t even consider that as an idea.

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 wouldn’t you think??”

NUCW News worth sharing:

At the NUCW Gathering in September we were given an update on the 60th Anniversary gathering to be held at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in Sydney Nova Scotia, July 11-15, 2022. Theme 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.

NUCW sent \$1,000 for relief in the Bahamas through the UCC relief fund. 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 meeting \$18,232.00 had been received and \$10,000 already sent to Zambia.

Our guest speaker on May 2 will update us about the project, so don’t miss it. If your UCW unit wishes to financially support the project at that time, please issue cheque to UCW WOW and it will be forwarded with all our donations by the treasurer.

“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 Whitton, 206-325 Willowdale Cres. Sarnia, ON. N7T 7R2, Ph: 519-344-2564.

If you would like a guest speaker, let someone on the TLTeam know and we'll try to make that happen for you.

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. This is a particular concern, especially for our many life-members.

Nancy Risto from Niagara Falls was elected President Elect and she will be installed for a 2-year term at our meeting in September 2020.

That concludes this newsletter. Please be in touch. And we hope to see you soon.