

! CONGRATULATIONS !



L-R: Betsy Fletcher, Bonnie Sturm, Shari Guinta; National President, Mary Hunt

Elsie Yanik Award - Congratulations to **Bonnie Sturm of St. Ambrose Council in Coaldale**, who is the recipient of the Elsie Yanik Award for 2023.

This nomination for Bonnie Sturm is not for a specific event or achievement, but for her lifetime dedication of ministry and service to the League, her parish, and community. She is an active participant in all three of our council's key ministries: Faith, Service, and Social Justice. Wherever, whenever, and however she serves is a labor of love and rooted in her Catholic faith. God had a specific purpose in mind when he created our sister Bonnie. He envisioned an extraordinary woman who would embrace her call to ministry and

graciously offer her gifts and talents in loving service

to others. He crafted the perfect blend of compassionate

heart, joyful spirit, and positive can-do attitude. In our council, our parish, and beyond, Bonnie embraces every opportunity to serve her brothers and sisters in Christ. She gracefully lives her vocation as a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and friend.

Since joining the Catholic Women's League at St. Ambrose Parish in 1971, Bonnie has served as treasurer, several terms as secretary, and as president from 1980 to 1982. At our council's 50th anniversary in 1999, she was presented with the prestigious Maple Leaf pin for her outstanding service.

Bonnie's beauty inside and out is characterized by her spirit of welcome and hospitality. She clearly demonstrates that everyone matters and everyone belongs! She is a friend to all and imparts her positive outlook and sunny disposition on everyone she meets. During her 53 years as a member, she has personally invited many women to join the League and has mentored and supported them in their journey. She has that special quality that brings out the best in others and encourages them to "walk together" through active engagement, collaboration, and teamwork.

Bonnie enthusiastically participates in every activity and has a reputation for taking on leadership roles and inspiring others to follow her example of servant leadership. She rises above life's challenges and views them as opportunities to be creative and explore new ideas. She is an incredible role model who is passionate about living her faith and call to ministry.

Whether Bonnie is organizing activities, guiding volunteers, or actively serving, she is a source of joy and inspiration.

Bonnie is always one of the first women to step up and offer her time and talent for any occasion. Every task that she undertakes, every minute of time that she offers, and every contribution that she makes is a labor of love. She has capably embraced three long-term leadership roles spanning over ten years in each ministry:

Faith Ministry

As *Pastoral Care Coordinator* for St. Ambrose Parish, Bonnie provides training and mentorship to team members and organizes the visitation schedule. When bringing the Holy Eucharist, weekly bulletins, and CWL prayer cards to the elderly and shut-ins, she takes the time to listen and to pray, helping people to feel valued and a sense of belonging to the parish. Bonnie also serves as the CWL representative on Parish Council.

Service Ministry

As *Funeral Lunch Coordinator* for our CWL council, Bonnie is the liaison with funeral homes and grieving families and is attentive to their special needs. Her sympathetic communication and proficient organization helps to relieve stress for distraught families. She also purchases the groceries and supplies, and oversees members' lunch preparation and service.

In addition, Bonnie is the co-chair for our council's 75th Anniversary Planning Committee and is actively involved in the celebrations to be held on June 14, 2024. She also leads and participates in fundraising events as a board member for the Gem of the West Museum.

Social Justice Ministry

As *Soup Kitchen Coordinator* for our parish's lunch schedule at the Lethbridge Soup Kitchen, Bonnie organizes the volunteers, provides guidance and mentorship, and oversees the lunch preparation and

service. Her gracious approach helps patrons to feel valued and respected without judgement. Our sister Bonnie reflects the same gentle disposition, humility, and spirit of faith and service as the late Elsie Yanik. Not only were they sisters in the League, but also exemplary women of deep faith who dedicated their lives to serving God by serving others. Through her active participation and leadership, Bonnie personifies how to gracefully be "*Catholic & Living It!*" while embodying the theme, "*Here I am Lord, send me.*"

Bonnie is one of those rare gems whose discipleship and call to ministry is a reflection of God's love for all. She is an amazing woman and we are honored to walk together with her on life's journey. We are blessed to call her our friend and sister - and blessed to have her in our council. She is so deserving of this distinguished award.

About Elsie Yanik:

Elsie Yanik was a giving woman with a quiet spirit, who used her gifts and talents to empower others around her. Her dedication to the wellbeing of her community was rooted in its people, and continues to inspire others. In 1997, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council, the Elsie Yanik Award was initiated to commemorate the leadership, ministry and service of Elsie Yanik to the Catholic community in the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

Do you know of a member who reflects this spirit of faith and service? Submit your nomination to Jan Myhre, Provincial Vice-President/Organization at abmkcwlvvp@gmail.com no later than December 31, 2024.

Visit the provincial website for further information: <https://www.cwlabmk.ca/awards.html>