# Alberta Mackenzie Fall Newsletter

**October 2024**

**www.cwlabmk.ca**

**Alberta Mackenzie 2024 – 2026 Council**

Seated (L-R): Linda Vandenberg, President-Grouard McLennan; Mary Hunt-ABMK past president; Betsy Fletcher-President; Jan Myhre-Vice President; Kathleen Winter, President-Calgary

Standing (L-R): Jean Ashdown, President-Edmonton; Mary Molloy-Faith; Celine Berlinguette-Treasurer; Bishop Gary Franken, ABMK Spiritual Advisor; Janet MacPhee-Secretary; Renee Spohn-Social Justice; Lola Alsmo-Service; Annette DeBoer, President-St. Paul

Shirley Gutierrez
President-
Mackenzie-Fort Smith

**Contents:**


- **Who we are**
- **The Alberta Mackenzie Executive Council**
- **Bishop Gary Franken**
- **Provincial / National summaries**
- **Awards**
- **Pictures!!!**


Faith

Service

Social Justice

***Here I am Lord, send me.***

*Heavenly Father,*
*Through the ages, you have called many to serve you.*
*Abraham, Sarah and Samuel;*
*Martha, Mary and Elizabeth,*
*As well as countless men and women throughout the ages.*
*All were different, and each brought unique gifts to your service.*
*Now today, we too hear your call to come and follow,*
*to bring our gifts to your service.*
*Help us, O Lord to make our reply,*
*"Here I am Lord, Send me"*
*with full and generous hearts,*
*in order that we may be your instruments in the building of your Kingdom.*
*We ask that you hear and answer our prayers through Christ our Lord.*
*Amen.*

*By Bishop Wayne Lobsinger*

National Theme

We acknowledge that we are on traditional territories in Alberta and the Northwest Territories of the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit, whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries. We express gratitude and respect for the land we use, and pledge to end systemic racism and commit to advancing reconciliation.

## President Betsy Fletcher

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His love endures forever."
Psalm 136.1

We all have so many things to be thankful for in our lives: our families, our careers, our friends and of course our faith. But how often do we forget to be grateful. Thanksgiving frequently reminds us to take stock of our lives and to give thanks to God for all that He has gifted us with. Gratitude will help us grow in our faith and our daily lives.

As a member of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, I am truly grateful for all the women I have met and worked and laughed with over my 38 years of membership. The mentorship and sisterhood I have experienced, have given me confidence in my life and made me not afraid to take on positions at various levels. I certainly would not be your provincial president without that mentorship. Members of the League support each other. It's just what we do. We lift up, not tear down. If you have a gift or talent, it will be recognized and you will be encouraged to share that gift with your League sisters.

What's holding you back? Is it fear you won't be up to the job? Trust me, if you take on a chair or other executive position, you will receive everything you need to succeed. Every executive member that has gone before you has had the same fears. You are not alone in that. You are also not alone once you take on a new adventure in The League. The support I have received as ABMK President has been astounding! My sisters know that I have some personal family issues going on with aging and ill parents and they are there to pick up the slack when I need some extra help.

I have discovered in my new position, just how much respect for the CWL there is in our communities. Having met with members of our Legislature, Priests, Bishops, Archbishops, members of the Knights of Columbus, and even visiting members of the 2025 Jubilee committee, it's clear that we have a great reputation for assisting and leading when and where required. Whether it's providing basic necessities for our sisters and brothers in The North, using resolutions to try to protect the unborn from abortion and the elderly and ill from MAiD, or advocating for the homeless and mentally ill, we will do everything we can to help.

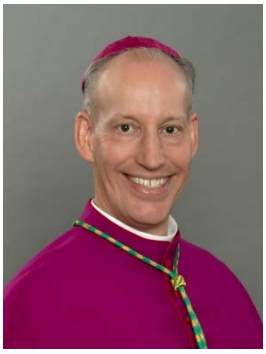
So, I ask again, what's holding you back? Take our theme **"Here I Am Lord, Send Me"** to heart and go where you are sent.

Betsy

### Alberta Mackenzie at National 2024

Alberta and the Northwest Territories were very well represented at the National Convention in Saskatoon Saskatchewan, August 2024. With over 90 members attending, your ABMK executive council were all there taking notes and providing support to our president, Betsy.

Many pictures were taken with a few appearing in this newsletter. Check out the website for more: www.cwlabmk.ca



## Spiritual Advisor Bishop Gary Franken

**Here I am Lord, send me**

Sometimes a phone call changes everything. Just over two years ago I was named Bishop of St. Paul Diocese. At the time I was a happy pastor of a small parish and the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Vancouver. That kind of change takes a bit of discernment to answer, but it didn't take me long as I called back two days later, affirming the appointment. Other than many good-byes, all I had to do was buy winter tires for my truck and then drive across the Rockies!

Upon settling here in Alberta, I quickly learned how many of my brother priests in the diocese had traveled much further than I had in answering the call to serve our Lord's people. Most of our clergy come from the Philippines, India, Vietnam, and Africa. I am very grateful for their "yes" to be assigned here in Canada.

However, answering our Lord by saying "Here I am Lord, send me," is not merely a geographical reality. For me and my brother priests, it is a "yes" to the people and situations that we now find ourselves encountering. And thus, this call of the Lord is for all of us: to respond in love to those the Lord gives us in our journey through life. It can be any phone call – or text or email – that is a call from God to love our neighbor as ourselves.

I pray that being a member of the Catholic Woman's League. strengthens and supports you in your Christian response to the Spirit's working in your lives.

**†Gary Franken**

**Bishop of St. Paul Diocese in Alberta**

Bishop Gary Franken and priests of the Diocese of St. Paul

## Vice President /Organization Jan Myhre

Ascension Church
June 2024
Fr. JP, Archbishop Smith,

The Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Convention held at Ascension Parish this past June was a huge success, and our thanks go out to Ascension Council and all the other councils who hosted us. Your hard work is so appreciated, and with over 170 in attendance, you made us feel welcome. Thank you!
As I settle into the role of Vice-President, I am excited to build relationships with my diocesan counterparts and support them in any way I can. Membership is a key role of the vice-president, and one of the best resources can be found on the national website, the *Welcome Program*.

At the National Convention in Saskatoon, our national Vice-President Betty Colaneri put on a wonderful workshop sharing her theme of **"1" for All and All for "1"**.
Everyone attending the session was welcomed with a smile and a hug. The workshop began by acknowledging that we need to show gratitude and appreciation to our current members, welcome back lapsed members, and create a welcoming atmosphere to attract new members. Over the past year, Betty's catch phrases included: **"It begins with '1'"; "'1' Can Make a Difference; "Love the '1' You're With; "The Chosen '1'"; "'1' Life Can Change the World".** She reminded us to be upbeat, be enthusiastic, be positive, and most of all, be joyful. If each member invites '1' woman to join us, we would double our membership. It all begins with '1' to make a difference, working together for God and Canada, 1 by 1. In September, Betty shared more thoughts in her Communique, encouraging councils to continue the momentum, with suggestions for October (Thankful for the Ultimate "1"); November: (Remembering the "1" Who Planted the Seed; December "1" Priceless Gift. I encourage you to read the Communique #11 and share these catch phrases with your members.

**Remembering Others**

O God, when I have food, help me to remember the hungry;
When I have work, help me to remember the jobless;
When I have a home, help me to remember those who have no home at all;
When I am without pain, help me to remember those who suffer,
And remembering, help me to destroy my complacency;
bestir my compassion, and be concerned enough to help;
By word and deed, those who cry out for what we take for granted.
*- Samuel F. Pugh*

# ! CONGRATULATIONS !
# AWARDS

## Father Walter Krewski Awards

Since 2007, the Father Walter Krewski Awards are presented to three councils in the Alberta Mackenzie area for increases in membership **during the previous year**. At the closing banquet of the 2024 Provincial Convention following awards were presented:

- For the greatest number of new members - St. Peter's, Calgary
- For the greatest increase in membership - St. Peter's Calgary
- For the greatest percentage increase in membership – St. Mary's Cathedral, Calgary

Councils who achieved an increase in membership in 2023, and submitted their information were presented with a certificate at their Diocesan Fall Meetings.

L-R: Jan Myhre, Mary Hunt, Judy Montes; St.Peter's, Rose Kastelic; St.Peter's

L-R: Mary Hunt, St Mary's Cathedral, St. Mary' Cathedral, Jan Myhre

Congratulations to:

| | |
|---|---|
| St. Paul – Airdrie | St. Clare – Edmonton |
| St. Alphonsus – Boyle | St. Joseph Basilica – Edmonton |
| Ascension – Calgary | St. Thomas More – Edmonton |
| Holy Name – Calgary | St. Elizabeth – Evansburg |
| Sacred Heart – Calgary | St. Francis de Sales – High River |
| St. Albert the Great – Calgary | Our Lady of Peace – Innisfail |
| St. Bernadette – Calgary | St. Stephen – Lacombe |
| St. Gerard – Calgary | St. Anthony – Lloydminster |
| St. Luke – Calgary | St. Agnes – Mayerthorpe |
| St. Mary's Cathedral – Calgary | St. James – Okotoks |
| St. Peter – Calgary | St. Michael – Pincher Creek |
| St. Thomas More – Calgary | St. Augustine – Ponoka |
| St. Francis Xavier – Camrose | St. Mary – Red Deer |
| St. Anthony – Didsbury | St. Albert – St. Albert |
| Annunciation – Edmonton | Our Lady of Fatima – Sundre |
| Corpus Christi – Edmonton | St. Peter Villeneuve |
| Our Lady of the Assumption – Edmonton | St. Mary – Westlock |
| St. Agnes – Edmonton | Sacred Heart - Wetaskiwin |

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

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

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

(con't from page 6)
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 abmkcwlvp@gmail.com no later than December 31, 2024.
Visit the provincial website for further information: https://www.cwlabmk.ca/awards.html

**About Father Walter Krewski:**

Father Walter was a long time spiritual advisor for the provincial council. He loved the League greatly and was an eager participate in CWL events at all levels. These awards are to encourage councils to invite all women to join The Catholic Women's League of Canada.
Visit the provincial website for further information: https://www.cwlabmk.ca/awards.html

Fr. Walter Krewski Increase in Membership certificates presented at Fall Meetings:

**Above:** St. Alphonsus, Boyle, St. Paul Diocese, presented by ABMK president, Betsy Fletcher (right)

**Below**: Calgary CWL councils receiving certificates in Lethbridge, presented by Theresa Duncan, Vice President (left) and Kathleen Winter , President(right)

## Past President / Archives Mary Hunt

We continue to be blessed with beautiful autumn weather. Diocesan Fall Meetings were held during the month of September where we eagerly gathered information about the work of the CWL in the coming months. Many councils are planning *Fall Fairs* to fundraise and build community. F all Recruitment events are being held and we are preparing for the 2025 Jubilee Year. The Holy Father, Pope Francis continues to remind us to understand and accept what it means to be a baptized believer in Jesus Christ…what does that mean to us as members of the Catholic Women's League?

**National Policy and Procedure Manual:**

There is a noteworthy revision to the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* that will affect those holding elections in the months ahead. At the August 11th nation executive board meeting, a motion was adopted to revise the wording in the nominations procedure outlined on page 105, lines 8 through 12. Of the P & P. The new wording is in bold below:

*3. A written reply will be requested and if the member is willing to accept nomination, a brief resume of her League service and experience* ***shall be included as well as a letter of good standing from her pastor or spiritual advisor****. At the national level, any member allowing her name to stand for the office of president (in the case of a vacancy in the position of vice-president), vice-president or secretary-treasurer shall submit with her resume a criminal records check for the purpose of volunteering with the non-vulnerable sector.*

A communiqué about this change will be posted to the website in the near future.

**Archives:**

Be sure to collect items for your archives. Look for a Past President's Communique regarding archiving on the ABMK website in the near future.

The CWL 100th Anniversary coffee table book is now available. Please contact the National Office to order:

I am grateful for the precious gift of membership in the League…are you???

May God's blessings and love be yours always…

**Archbishop's Dinner – Edmonton Convention Centre, October 4, 2024**

We gathered over 1200 strong at the Edmonton Convention Centre. It was a wonderful evening and we were gifted with the company of seminarians at our table. His Grace encouraged us to put the Word of God into practice through ***Eucharistic Worship, Confident Witness and Service to Marriage & Family***

L-R: Mary Molloy (ABMK Faith), Mary Hunt (ABMK Past President) Jan Myhre (ABMK Vice-President), Betsy Fletcher (ABMK President)

**ABMK Past Presidents who served with Father Andrew Bogdanowicz**
**Left to Right: Dorothy Johansen (2012-2015), Cathy Bouchard (2015-2017),**
**June Fuller (2017-2019), Fr. Andrew, Judy Look (2019-2022) and Mary Hunt (2022-2024)**

At the Fall Meeting of the ABMK Provincial Executive, there was a small gathering to honour Father Andrew Bogdanowicz and thank him for his 12 years of service as Spiritual Advisor to the Provincial Council. Present were the five presidents who served with Father. Following a Celebration of the Eucharist a reception was held where each of the presidents shared a memory of Father Andrew and closed with remarks from him. Gifts were presented along with the singing of the ***CWL Blessing Song.*** It was a fitting tribute to this treasured priest.

## Faith Mary Molloy

As fall graces us with its beautiful changing colors, we are reminded to reflect on the many gifts God has bestowed upon us through His creation and the Church. As Scripture tells us, "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God endures forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

The National Annual Convention in Saskatoon provided a wonderful opportunity to gather with CWL members from across Canada. One of the highlights was the spiritual offerings, including a variety of prayer services to prepare for the upcoming **Ordinary Jubilee of 2025, titled *Pilgrims of Hope*.** Pope Francis has proclaimed 2024 as a Year of Prayer, encouraging both individual and communal prayer to listen to and adore the Lord. I invite you to join in reciting the Jubilee Prayer.

In preparation for **Jubilee 2025**, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) are offering a series of spring and fall webinars led by Dr. Josephine Lombardi from St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto. The series, titled *A Great Symphony of Prayer: The Our Father as a Programme of Life*, offers two more sessions this year:

- October 17: *The Prayer of Jesus (John 17)*
- October 24: *Lectio Divina: The Storm at Sea*

Both webinars are free to attend, and registration is available online. Bishop Lobsinger shared his thoughts on the vital role of spiritual advisors within the League at every level. He encourages us to stay connected with our spiritual advisors, involve them in our meetings, and even ask them to lead retreats for members. Once a spiritual advisor is appointed, it is essential to officially install them in their role. Seek their wisdom, guidance, and support as we advance the mission of the Catholic Women's League of Canada.

The National Chairperson of Faith, Rolande Chernichan, has posted her October Communique on the National website. You can read her full report here: October Communique. Additionally, a *Calendar of Faith Events* (#186) and new faith resources, including *Prayers & Spirituals* (#626) and *Prayer Services Planning Workshop/Speakers Notes* (#628), are available to help you plan meaningful liturgies.

On September 18, 2024, a meeting with the Diocesan Faith Chairs was held via Zoom. This was a great opportunity to connect, share resources, and strengthen our relationships. Two joint meetings of the Diocesan Faith, Service, and Social Justice Chairs, organized by the three Provincial Chairs, are scheduled for the end of October and November. The new structure of the League fosters collaboration among these committees, helping to build stronger ties between Provincial and Diocesan Committees. At the Provincial level, the three chairs are also working together on the ABMK Quilt Project.

Together, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will grow in faith.

"Here I am, Lord, Send me!"

God bless, *Mary*

### The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ,
our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the
seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from
within both humanity and the
whole cosmos in the sure
expectation of a new heaven and a
new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil
vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of
heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our
Redeemer throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen

Franciscus

## Social Justice Renee Spohn

In the spirit of our theme, "Here I am Lord, send me", I give thanks that Jesus has called me to leadership in the Catholic Women's League! I welcome the opportunity to get to know you better. Whether we are starting our new relationship or continuing an existing one, I am available for a phone call, zoom, or coffee.

*"To all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity!"*

Pope Francis

Together, we are called to advocate for Social Justice: the dignity of human life, workers, the poor, and God's creations. I will provide resources to inform, encourage us to communicate with government, and act on our human rights, palliative care, MAiD, Bill S210 pornography, and Truth & Reconciliation.

We are blessed to have excellent Diocesan Social Justice Chairs. I have contacted them to build relationships, inquire about your needs, understand your advocacy goals, and obtain updates about resolutions in your diocese. I will host regular zoom meetings with them so that together we can offer you resources and support for your parish council advocacy. Your strong work ethic is appreciated, and you can make a difference!

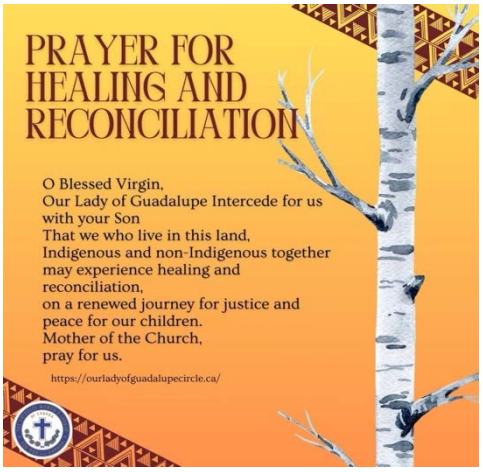
I encourage you to take a "three pillar" approach for each social justice issue and work collaboratively with the other two chairs. For example, for palliative care: *Faith* - 12 hours of palliative care; *Service* – provide lap blankets and participate in a Hospice Walk to raise money; and *Social Justice* – have an awareness workshop to educate members about palliative care and MAiD.

I am thankful for the resources on the National website. Where are you being called? Let us become aware of, educate ourselves, and consider the following:

Resolutions - The Catholic Women's League of Canada (cwl.ca)
Three resolutions adopted at the 104th Annual National Convention, their briefs and action plans.

Workshops - The Catholic Women's League of Canada (cwl.ca)

- Legislation: #829A and #829B
- Advocacy: #831 series
- Resolutions: #833 series
- Government Relations: #834 series




Indigenous Resources - The Catholic Women's League of Canada (cwl.ca)
The resource "Walking Together with Indigenous Women" is for Indigenous women seeking information on their heritage, and for non-Indigenous members looking to learn about Indigenous communities in their area. Learn more about their ways of life, their prayers, and how to build relationships with them.

I am on a journey with you and have great hope for the future of the Catholic Women's League and our commitment to Social Justice. *Renee*

## Service Lola Alsmo

Greetings, Everyone,
The most exciting thing as I prepared this report was seeing our Alberta-Mackenzie ladies who attended National Convention, front and center on the National website's home page, during the month of September.

The three Resolutions passed at National in August relate to all three chairs, but I find that 2024.01 fits very clearly under the Service committee as an effort related to homelessness. 2024.01 Increase Supported Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness with Mental Health and Mental Illness Issues
Establishing a safe place for persons in need was a goal of the founders and remains a need we can address as catholic women working together.

Our National Chair, Joline Belliveau did set up a virtual meeting for August 27th that I was unable to attend. From the notes that she subsequently circulated, the following information and topics were dealt with:
The group discussed the three former committees that were combined into Service, and that this committee is more than a list of make-do projects. The decision was to not change the Standing Committee name.
Memos and communiques will be distributed by national to the other levels of the league on September 1st, November 15th, March 15th, and May 15th.
National has decided against initiating any new projects

I have the contact names and an email group for the five Diocesan Service Chairs and look forward to working with them and the other two pillars chairs over the next two years.

Lola and Jan leading all in song at Father Andrew's mass ↑
←Calgary group of CWL members at the National Banquet
↓ Annette, Lola and others at the Provincial Dinner

## Treasurer Celine Berlinguette

Greetings my dear sisters in Christ!
Have you ever noticed that if you need to get something done, you ask a busy person?
When I was reading the 2024 New life member's bio's, the one thing that was front and foremost was their involvement in community, parish life and the various levels of the Catholic Women's League Councils. Amazing ladies and great role models!

And as I was thinking about all the ladies that I have had the pleasure of working with at the Parish, Diocesan and Provincial level, each have brought forth a wealth of knowledge and experience. Who we are as Catholic women is reflected in our very being.

At the 2024 Alberta Mackenzie Provincial convention in Calgary, I started my second term as the treasurer for the Catholic Women's League Provincial Council. The treasurer's position is one that I enjoy doing as it deals with budgets, spreadsheets, numbers, deposits and payments, all functions that enjoy doing.

At the Parish level, councils fund-raise to support their various initiatives. Two of the initiatives that are supported and flow through the Provincial Council are: Nickels for the North and Alberta March for Life. The remittance form is found on the ABMK website. To have your contribution reflected in the 2024 books, please mail/e-transfer your remittance prior to December 10th.

As we get ready for another year-end, I ask the Diocesan Treasurers to please send me a copy of their Treasurer' report, so the information can be compiled for the Provincial Annual Report book.

At our ABMK September Fall meeting, a motion was made to donate five thousand dollars to the Arch-Diocese of Edmonton for the Jasper Fund, after their devastating fire.

The planning committee for the 2025 Provincial Convention has been set up and we have had one meeting to discuss preliminary plans. At our next meeting we hope to have some costs, so we can start working on setting up a budget.

With continued gratitude for all our CWL commitments, accomplishments and sisterhood,

*Celine*

**New Life Members for Alberta Mackenzie:**

Gwen Elliott

Linda VandenBerg

## Secretary/Communications Janet MacPhee

As I start this new role on the Alberta Mackenzie Council, I find that I am doing a lot of praying and searching – especially for pictures!
With communications being added into the role of secretary, I will endeavour to communicate with all.
The major goal I have is to update our website – this will be achieved with help and lots of prayers. By the new year you will see a change to it.

At our provincial convention in June we tried a new method bringing the information to the members there. Using Zoom closed captions we were able to display the words spoken by most of the speakers up onto the screen. The success of this was about 50% - further research will be required to address the issues of making sure everyone can see and hear the goings on of our meetings.
I attended the following sessions at National:
**Break-out Session – Social Media – Connection** with Dorothy Johansen, National Secretary/Treasurer
Dorothy referred to the Pastoral Letter on Social Media
https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Pastoral-Letter-on-Social-Media_EN-2024-01-22.pdf
We need to see relish the privilege in Real Live Encounters – IRL!
There were two discussion questions:

1) How to figure out if something on Social Media is TRUE?
2) If you see something on social media that offends you do you comment or scroll past?

Our table had a lively discussion on these – as did the whole room.
The take home questions are: Are you content with the amount of time you spend on Social Media? Do you wish for less or more time? How do I keep it in check as to the amount of time on it?
Refer to the National P&P for guidelines for a Facebook page and websites – Section 10 – Media.

**Break-out Session – Walk with Him** with Rolande Chernichan
There were five presenters:
Cathy Bouchard – Walk the path of Faith Hope and Love, walking on the road to Emmaus – does He walk with me or do I walk with Him? – Visio Divina – Sacred Seeing
Sr Susan Scott – Catholic Social Teaching Working Group – resource #624
Jessie Parkison – Resolutions – Our Faith in Action – Corporal Works of Mercy
Alice Noble – Faith and Social Media – which sites to trust – CCCB, WUCWO, Holy See
Jackqueline Nogier – **Prayer and Copyright – resource #628A**
The main take away I had from this session is that all the resources materials that are available on the National CWL website we can print and quote and **use without worry of copyright!**

*National is bringing many webinars to our members. Please continue to check the events calendar on the National website.*

**Shirley Gutierrez – Mackenzie Fort Smith**

My name is Shirley Gutierrez of Filipino descent. I have been in Canada for 34 years now specifically here in Hay River, Northwest Territories. I have 3 children all born in the North. I have been running a Family Day home since 1997 up to present and still not sure when to retire as I love looking after little kids.

I have been very much involved in our parish of Assumption Church organizing fundraising for our building renovations, being part of the choir, help setting up for church different themes or services, the hall rental person, and a member of the parish council as Social committee chairperson.

I have been a member of Catholic Women's league for 21 years now and hold different positions locally, being the President and chairpersons in different committees. I was the Mackenzie Diocesan President for 3 years during CoVid, got a couple years break but with the elected president resigning, I am back again since I was the Vice President.

There are 3 councils in our diocese but one of them is a big challenge for us and we're trying to resolve this for the last few years now. With help from their local priest, our Spiritual advisor, members of our executives and a Life member from our Alberta sisters, we are hoping to get this sorted out. Time is just not cooperating right now but we're hoping we can get this done by next year.

Our new theme is so fitting and such an inspiring one! Together with our new set up thru the strategic planning, I am hoping that this will ignite our new and not so new members to really be active and be a part of the league's leadership. I know they will because we had new representations at both Provincial and National Conventions and they were so amazed and looking forward in attending future ones! And my goal is to keep this glow of interest so we can hopefully harvest new leaders for our diocese.

Here's to our newly elected officers.... God bless us all!

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE YEAR THAT PASSED
WITHOUT THE CALAMITIES OF FLOODING AND WILDFIRES
THAT HAS THREATED THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. AMEN

**Annette de Boer – St. Paul**

St Paul Diocese spreads from Whitecourt/Fox Creek in the west then north past Swan Hills and Athabasca to Fort McMurray. In the east it encompasses Cold Lake, Bonnyville and St Paul and to the south it includes Morinville, Westlock and Barrhead. We currently have 15 CWL councils for a total of 441 members. We are very proud to acknowledge three members from St Paul Diocese who are part of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Officers – President Betsy Fletcher (Cold Lake), Treasurer Celine Berlinguette (Lac La Biche) and Service Chair Lola Alsmo (Thorhild).

Our fall Diocesan meeting was held on September 28 in Mallaig, Alberta. Mallaig is a small community about 25 km from St Paul, and until August 1st, 2024 it was one of the parishes served by Father Jhack Diaz our St Paul Diocesan Spiritual Advisor. Father Jhack has been reassigned to serve Athabasca, Boyle, Buffalo Lake and Rochester. Mallaig does not currently have a CWL council, but Father Jhack is working hard to encourage the ladies of the parish to begin one, and as such asked them to host our fall diocesan meeting. It was a pleasure to meet the eight ladies from Mallaig who did a fabulous job of hosting our meeting.

Our fall meeting included reports from our Diocesan Officers as well as our Parish Presidents.
We had a dual format meeting – in person but also included a Zoom meeting option for our Social Justice chair Sylvia Ellison and our Parish Presidents from Fort McMurray, Westlock and Whitecourt who were not able to attend in person. It worked well and allowed us to hear reports
that we would not otherwise have heard. Other parish councils who did not have anyone in attendance submitted reports that were read to the assembly by our Secretary.
Father Jhack was not able to attend but sent a beautiful message and we also had a message from Bishop Gary Franken, Bishop of St Paul Diocese.
As part of our meeting we included a sharing session, where several members spoke about why they joined the CWL, but more importantly what had kept them in the CWL for many years.
This was to provide our Mallaig hosts with more information on the CWL and why it is important. We were also very interested in the Mallaig ladies impressions after attending the meeting and hearing more about the CWL. They made no promises, but we are hopeful and continue to pray that they will be called to either start a CWL council or at least join with the council in St Paul and encourage it to be more active.

Our mid-winter meeting will be held on February 1, 2025 via Zoom and our 2025 convention is
scheduled for May 2-3 in Lac La Biche. We are very pleased that Bishop Gary Franken has already agreed to give a workshop for our convention!

The Catholic Women's League in St Paul Diocese is mighty in heart and we are very thankful for the many members who have followed the call – Here I am Lord, Send me.

**Linda VandenBerg – Grouard McLennan**

The Grouard McLennan Diocese spans northern Alberta from High Prairie to Peace River to High Level and from Valleyview to Grande Prairie and north to Peace River on the West side of the province. There are currently fourteen active councils, one inactive council and one council in the process of disbanding. The membership is currently at 499 as of the end of September. One of our major goals is to increase our membership.

Over the last two years, the current past president, Lucille Partington and current president, Linda VandenBerg made it a mission to connect with each and every council in person, either doing the Unity Project, presenting on the 3 committees, or involving the membership in faith, service and social justice committee work. As a result, they have come to know that the grassroots membership wants to be involved. The service committees all across the diocese are working hard to support their churches and provide for their members. The social justice committee is working to support the Beaverlodge council in developing a resolution to support Grandparents raising Grandchildren. In fact the Fall Education Workshop on October 19 is all about developing this resolution.

Faith Development is one of the areas in which we wish to grow over the next two years. Plans are in the works for a Faith Retreat for the diocese in February and we hope to bring in Leah Perrault to lead us in this area. There will be more information on this in the future.
Please pray for our success.
Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us.
Amen.

**Upcoming dates:**

October 19, 2024 - GM Diocesan Fall Workshop Sexsmith AB
October 19 - 25, 2024 - Catholic Education Week
November 5, 2024 - Free webinar by Canadian Jesuits International, *Forced to Flee: People and Rights Under Threat* (https://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/forced-to-flee-people-and-rights-under-threat/ )
November 23, 2024 - Mid-winter GM diocesan meeting, Zoom
February 22, 2025 - GM Faith Retreat in Berwyn
March 9, 2025 - GM Spring Meeting TBA
April 26, 2025 - GM Diocesan Convention at St. Paul's in High Prairie
**June 6-8, 2025 - ABMK Provincial Convention, St. Joseph's in Grande Prairie**

**Jean Ashdown – Edmonton**

We have much to be thankful for when members of the CWL get together – at meetings and conventions, in our celebrations, and in masses and prayer services. It is uplifting to see us together growing in our faith, providing service in our churches and communities, and getting fired up about social justice issues, all motivated by our belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

Our meetings and conventions provide us with those opportunities to meet each other and to learn together. At our National Convention in Saskatoon in August, there were two days of presentations and workshops which provided opportunities for table discussions and time to share with other CWL members from across the country. There is so much to learn from each other especially about what other councils do. In reviewing the annual report, it was interesting to see that Alberta was the only province showing an increase in members in 2023. Membership numbers are up slightly in our Diocese this year with a total 3,646 members and we trust that this upward trend in our diocese and province will continue.

The Edmonton Diocesan Fall Meeting was held in Rimbey on September 28th. There were 99 in attendance with representation from 32 of our 60 councils. Reports were presented and our budgets for 2025 were adopted.

Mary Hunt explained that ABMK Provincial Council has decided to offer to host the 2028 National Convention and would like to locate it in Edmonton. This will give our members an opportunity to attend a National Convention close to home and to get involved in the planning and hosting.

We had a session on rosary making where each person could make a rosary. These will be given to Deacon Eddie of Rimbey who will use them when he does prison ministry. We hope councils may use this skill to support others doing prison ministry or to bring this to schools in their parish where they could make and pray the rosary in classrooms.

Alana LaPerle spoke on the Hope & Dignity initiative of the Archdiocese. More information is available on their website, *Hope & Dignity: A Catholic response to Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide* (https://hopeanddignity.caedm.ca/ ). She especially encouraged CWL councils to get involved in helping with the efforts of their parish to become a 'Compassionate Parish' where people going through struggles will be able to get information and support from their parish.

As the Archdiocesan Pastoral Priorities for the next three years were just launched on September 14th, Clover Oryschak, Past President, facilitated small group discussions about how the Diocesan Council of the CWL should respond to the priorities which are: Eucharistic Worship, Confident Witnesses, and Service to Families and Marriage. The Diocesan officers look forward to reviewing the ideas generated and incorporating some of these into what we do over the next few years.

**Kathleen Winter – Calgary**
Calgary Diocese has 46 councils and 3,084 paid members.

Calgary Diocesan Council gathered at All Saints Hall in Lethbridge, Alberta for the 2024 Fall Meeting with 95 ladies attending. The morning started with Mass concelebrated by Our Diocesan Spiritual Advisor Fr. Pilmaikén Lezano and Fr. Cristino Bouvette.
Fr. Cristino Bouvette was our keynote speaker speaking on **Steps Toward Reconciliation and Braiding Indigenous Spirituality with the Catholic Faith.** Fr. Cristino made us laugh, shared stories about his kokum, his Uncle Ralph who was the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Alberta and his role in making the visit of Pope Francis to Canada a great success.
Fr. Pilmaikén's spiritual reflection tells us although each parish is different, a small community within the renewal, we are all walking together with the same goal of forming missionary disciples of the Lord with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Bishop O'Byrne scholarship was presented to Rosa Lyngberg a member of St. Luke's Council who had a desire to deepen her faith and to help others by completing a Spiritual Direction Training Program through the FCJ Centre.
Spiritual Direction is accompanying people on their spiritual journey by being a very good listener and asking questions that encourage them to look inward and be closer to God.

Fr. Walter Krewski Award winners offered membership advice

- Joan Shillington from St. Peter's Council, Calgary said having a very supportive priest and deacon, being visible in the church throughout the year, having CWL ministry Masses and during the membership drive have a trifold and ambassadors to answer questions made a difference. Having a greater emphasis on faith activities at meetings, living rosaries during May and October keep members coming back.
- EE Lynn Lee from St. Mary's Cathedral, Calgary said they have very supportive priests who talk about their membership drive and fundraising events at the Mass announcements. They have made presentations of cheques to the Cathedral and Elizabeth House near the end of Mass. They take every opportunity to don their CWL garb, wear blue, name tags during special parish events. They encourage potential members to "come and see" and welcome them to "come and stay".

Fr. Walter Krewski certificates were presented to 14 councils who had an increase in membership during 2023.

The 77th Annual Convention of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada was held on May 31, June 1 2024 at the beautiful Ascension Church in NE Calgary, hosted by the Calgary Diocesan Council, North Calgary Regional Councils.

Friday was a very full day with speakers, workshops, fellowship, meeting new friends and greeting old ones.

The theme of the convention was "Here I am Lord, send me" with the spirituals, speakers and workshops concentrating on it.

The keynote speaker was our own National President, **Shari Guinta** – "Here I am Lord, Send Me" was her topic of discussion. Shari noted ..."Faith must come first. Without it, we cannot adequately serve, even when we aim to serve in good and holy ways." "Here I am Lord, send me, remember to ask the Lord where and how He is sending us? Put faith in Him first and He will show us where and how He wants us to serve".

**Dr. Monique Withers** – spoke on Palliative Care – she is a palliative care physician, defined palliative as a medical condition that cannot be treated. She stated, "It is important to communicate your wishes about dying. The dignity of the person is important."

**Archbishop Richard Smith** – Encountering Christ on our Faith Journey – Stop Look Listen
**Bishop William McGrattan** – Living a Life of Intentional Discipleship – Communion Participation Mission (spoke on Saturday)
For an excellent writeup on their presentations please go to:
https://www.calgarycwl.ca/images/Newsletters/2024-2_News_Bulletin_August.pdf

**Sam Cote** – Pro-Life Guy – "This raises the question of when human life begins and is abortion aged- based discrimination?"

**Four Workshops** were presented and well attended by the members:

- Magnificent Meetings
- Circle of Life: Mentorship
- The Holy Spirit is Listening: Faith the Gift of Hope
- Human Trafficking Exists in our AMBK communities

**Saturday** was the business meeting – reports, discussions, questions. The day ended with the election of the 2024-2026 Alberta Mackenzie Executive Council.

*(For your information: As there was several technical issues occurring there is a lack of pictures of this event. With prayers and hope, pictures for this event will be posted on the website in December.)*

**Thank you to the Calgary Diocesan Council for the contributions to the reports.**

The 104th National Convention in Saskatoon Saskatchewan was very well attended by the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial CWL. All executive attended along with over 90 others from across the province and territories.

National convention had a different format than in previous years, as Monday and Tuesday were educational in nature, mostly guest speakers, workshops and breakout sessions. The annual meeting was only three hours on Wednesday, and there were no reports from the three committee chairs, or from the Provincial Presidents (greatly missed).

This convention was videoed and most presentations including the Eucharistic Celebrations are available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@cwlnational
This is the link to the YouTube video for Wednesday August 14 – the Business Meeting:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Utk1EmvTZyg
Reports are also available on the National website.

**Workshops:** There was plenty of workshops with a few of the ABMK council assisting:
**Be Not Afraid: An interactive workshop on Crafting Resolutions –** Betsy Fletcher and Mary Hunt assisted with this workshop
This workshop covered three aspects of crafting a resolution. The first topic was about crafting your resolution. The first step of course is deciding on a topic. Once you have that, decide on which level of The League the resolution will be directed to. Forming a committee and figuring out how to go forward with research comes next. Once you draft your resolved clause, determining the direction of your research will present itself. Using technology can make it easier to do the research. It's important to become more comfortable with technology or find a committee member who is. Learning about Artificial Intelligence or AI and how it can be useful in research is something that we need to be more open about. It can be used very effectively, but there are concerns to take into account. There may be several articles on the same subject, so be careful that the information you are getting is accurate. Don't be afraid to seek our counsel from experts on your subject matter. Check out Chat GPT just to see how it works.
Resolutions are about making a difference. The cornerstones of a resolution are faith, good stewardship and walking worthy. Using our faith will guide us along the way to create resolutions that will inform our quest for social justice. Use the beatitudes and good stewardship as guides to what you are looking for in creating your resolution. To walk worthy is to try to rise above reproach in a society and culture that boasts that "everything goes as long as it's not hurting anyone".
Crafting resolutions should be exciting, not something to be afraid of.
**"1" for All and All for "1"** – Betty Colaneri – Jan Myhre assisted
I am a part of Betty's subcommittee, who assisted Betty in presenting this breakout session on membership. Everyone attending the session was welcomed with a smile and a hug. The workshop began by acknowledging that we need to show gratitude and appreciation to our current members, welcome back lapsed members, and create a welcoming atmosphere to attract new members. Over the past year, Betty's catch phrases included: "It begins with '1'"; "'1' Can Make a Difference; "Love the '1' You're With; "The Chosen '1'"; "'1' Life Can Change the World"; She reminded us to be upbeat, be enthusiastic, be positive, and most of all, be joyful. If each member invites '1' woman to join us, we would double our membership. It all begins with '1' to make a difference, working together for God and Canada, 1 by 1.

**Kathleen Winter,** President Calgary Diocesan Council, gives a very detailed report on the Unity Outreach Project presented by Shari Guinta at the National Convention. To view this report go to:
https://www.calgarycwl.ca/images/Newsletters/2024-2_News_Bulletin_August.pdf
**Theresa Duncan,** Vice-President Calgary Diocesan Council, gives an excellent report on the National Spiritual Advisor's Message – Synodality and Spiritual Advisors. To view this report go to:
https://www.calgarycwl.ca/images/Newsletters/2024-2_News_Bulletin_August.pdf

Thank you to Kathleen and Theresa for these reports.

# Alberta Mackenzie at National Convention

**Saskatoon Saskatchewan August 2024**

ABMK Provincial Photo