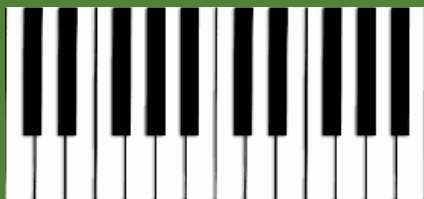


Church Women United in Wisconsin

Volume 64 Issue 4

Fall Newsletter 2018

2018 World
Community Day
Reaching for
Wholeness



In Harmony With
God's People

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Calendar

Oct. 11... State Board Meeting

Nov. 2 ...World Community Day

Dec. 4 WCC Annual Meeting

Unity at the Table

A recent series of messages developed by our pastors at Platteville United Methodist Church on the theme "Welcome to the Table" was very inspiring and challenging for me. Each sermon related a familiar story about people who came to the table with Jesus. In my heart I truly believe that everyone is welcome to have a place at the table regardless of the backgrounds and baggage we bring.

Being at the table reminds me that we meet at the table during Communion and are invited to participate in this Holy Mystery. The service that I attend, celebrates Communion the first Sunday of each month, but our contemporary service celebrates communion weekly. Sunday, October 7 was World Wide Communion Day when Christians around the world were invited to share the gifts at the Table of love and reconciliation.

Further reflections make me think about welcoming others to share in worship and be welcomed into the community of faith. In this manner, we will be open to our brothers and sisters of various economic backgrounds, racial and ethnic identities, and LGBTQ orientations. **Let's pray for a place at the table for everyone.**

Isn't it amazing that God leads us to places and situations that challenge our thinking and help us grow as individuals and as God's children? Sometimes the growth is gentle, but sometimes it is actually painful. Living on a Native American Reservation as a Head Start Director and teaching in the inner city taught me that. When my career took a turn from teaching children to teaching adults, I concluded that my career path would lead me into teaching higher education in institutions that were rooted in Christian principles, and for a time that was true.

In 1994, my comfortable world changed because the small college where I was teaching fell on hard times. There was an opening at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, I applied and became a member of the University and Platteville communities. But, it wasn't the path that I thought my career would follow. Today, I know why I came to UWP - because I taught with colleagues whose lifestyles, worship practices, personal choices, national origins or backgrounds were different than my own. My co-workers became and remain good friends and people that I care about. When we meet downtown or on campus there are friendly greetings, sometimes hugs and meaningful conversations. I thank God for these experiences that forced me to grow in relationships and in faith.

As we move forward with a commitment to examine God's challenges in our lives, may we meet them with grace and dignity. Let's grow in faith and let the love of God shine through us.

Celebrating our friendships and our places at the table, I remain,

Carol Lange / President CWU in Wisconsin

.....A Recap of the 2018 CWU State Assembly

What a wonderful turnout by attendees, presenters, and our hosts, the Fond du Lac Unit of Church Women United! The women who came early on Friday had the added bonus of a tour of Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, while many women arose in the early hours Saturday to catch a bus or carpool to the Assembly.

Forty-three women registered and joined together for conversation and light refreshments at Memorial Baptist Church. We then moved into the sanctuary for welcome addresses by our State Board President, Carol Lange, and Fond du Lac Unit Vice-President, Rosemary Helmer. Retired minister, Joanne Talaska, led devotions and we were ready for our keynote speaker, Rev. Mary Council-Austin. What a remarkable women! Her faith journey crosses decades, experiences, and cultures. As a reminder to us not to forget those women who have gone before, we received glowing stones to take along home.

Rev. Council-Austin also led the Memorial Service where the names of those recently deceased were read, and a votive candle was lit in their honor. Let us always remember!

The Salvation Army was chosen by Fond du Lac CWU, our host unit, as our Mission Project. Fond du Lac Salvation Army area representative, Major Kim Welch, spoke to us about her involvement with both Church Women United and the Salvation Army. She gratefully accepted the donations of non-perishable items as well as monetary donations. The organization is doing much to help with food, rent, gas, and utility payments for those in need. Even as the economy seems strong, there are rising numbers of people who are in poverty and are not able to provide adequate food or housing for themselves or their families. We need to be generous when we see those red kettles at Christmas, as well as throughout the year.



Keynote Speaker - Reverend Mary Council-Austin



Major Kim Welch of the Fond du Lac Salvation Army

.....A Recap of the 2018 CWU State Assembly continued.....

Drug Free Communities speakers Alex Berg, Steve Galske, and Geri Loewe gave an outstanding panel presentation on the Opioid Crisis. The panel included psychological, medical, and law enforcement perspectives and emphasized that we cannot expect to arrest our way out of the problem. Their forward-thinking approaches to the problem involve concern for our young children, especially those where early onset stress contributes to rewiring the brain that leads to disfunction and poor decision making later in life. Also, in Fond du Lac County, some first-time offenders selected for a special program have been very successful in avoiding re-entry into the drug scene.



Steve Galske, Alex Berg, and Geri Loewe from Drug Free Communities addressed the Opioid Crisis.

Lunch was served, featuring an excellent chicken salad along with side dishes - and yes, homemade desserts! If you stopped at only one, you were in the minority!

Sister Ruth Battaglia reminded us that there are two kinds of human trafficking happening in our area: labor and sexual. It is important for all of us to be aware, and make others aware, of what to watch for. She and others have visited local restaurants, motels, sporting events, etc., to ask for those areas to be especially vigilant. She stressed that we should not approach a suspected perpetrator, but to call a hotline number to report our concern.



Sister Ruth Battaglia of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Agnes spoke on Human Trafficking.

Our CWU Regional Coordinator, Judy Reimer, gave us an overview of what is going on, both nationally and in our Midwest district, and installed the officers for our State Board.

During the business meeting we approved the minutes from the previous assembly and passed a new budget, emphasizing the decision to use some of our funds to help board members and local units fund training and enrichment opportunities. The Christensen Fund will be contributing \$400 in 2019, and an ad hoc committee is being organized to administer those funds. There will be more on that process in future newsletters. Unit volunteers are needed to serve on the committee.

Evaluations turned in at the end of the Assembly affirmed the programs and workings of the 2018 Assembly with excellent scores, averaging above 4.5 on a scale of 1 - 5.

We hope you enjoyed this year's gathering and that you met old friends and made new ones.

Peace.

Kris Clausing,

Assembly Chair for 2018.

Unit News

Outagamie County CWU

Greetings to all from Outagamie County.

Outagamie Church Women United meet as an ecumenical group for celebrations four times per year. We attempt to carry out the themes of our celebrations and goals of Church Women United through worshipping together and featuring guest speakers. We find that speakers and awareness of local issues has a definite effect on our attendance. We have had 30-45 people per celebration. We have had speakers discussing: 1. The plight of DACA locally in which we welcomed a farm worker to talk on DACA's effect on his life, his family, and the operations of the farm where he works. 2. Local efforts to foster diversity and inclusiveness, and commitments to "Respect One Another". 3. Environmental Stewardship. 4. Update on our local Goodwill Program in which a former Mission partner spoke about their ongoing needs and concerns, and described programs they have developed to meet these needs.

We continue to work with our current Mission partner, the Fox Valley Warming Shelter, by bringing items to each celebration to help sustain them, and through an annual monetary donation. Our board meets 10 times per year, this year's focus is on maintaining our churches and getting new representatives on the board as many on the board are unable to attend and represent their churches due to age and illnesses. We are formulating clear job descriptions for local positions to help clarify responsibilities and expectations. We celebrate that we do have a treasurer now.

We pray for guidance going forth in the coming year.

Jayne Heinrich, President of Outagamie CWU

La Crosse Area CWU

As we enter October and the fall season, we find ourselves called to review our goals and expectations for 2018 with a view for the future. We chose to make

Priority #4: *Diversity and Inclusiveness* our focus for 2018. In January 2018, Kathy Weeks and I attended a one-day ELCA Synod meeting which introduced the publication of Wisconsin Council of Churches entitled, *Wisconsin's Racial Disparities on Behalf of Our Children and the Call of the Gospel.* Based on this experience, Kathy led our Key Leaders in a half hour discussion at each of our Key Leader meetings. The topics included: a definition/description of racism and the Gospel; the hidden power of racism in ourselves, our families, our broader community; and what racism looks like in the State of Wisconsin.

Our main focus at this time is "What is God calling us to do?" The website for the local YWCA indicated that their social justice committee has been looking at this very topic. We called a small meeting with Rebecca Schultz, director, to understand what their findings have been in the community and what their directions are. At this meeting we discovered that a local group was sponsoring a People Fest in August at Riverside Park from 1:30-7:00 pm. This event included a number of cultures of our area along with their native dress, dance, food, music, etc. CWU contributed financially as a sponsoring entity. It was a wonderful opportunity to experience and support other cultures of our area. We are looking at making this an annual event.

Rebecca Schwarz from the area YWCA will attend our Key Leader meeting in October to engage our unit in a discussion of some other appropriate, ongoing outreach. Given the number of local outreach endeavors, we are looking at partnering with others rather than launching something new of our own.

In November, we will celebrate World Community Day when we will celebrate our Valiant Woman for 2018 and bring donations of coats and warm clothing for the Salvation Army.

Sr. Eileen Lang, fspa President of La Crosse CWU

.....State News and Celebrations

World Community Day

November 2, 2018

On November 2nd, women from across the state and nation will gather together in our final celebration of the year, World Community Day.

World Community Day began in 1943 after unit leaders requested that a day be set aside in the fall for the study of peace. Today World Community Day continues to emphasize peace, but has been broadened to include justice, a critical partner of peace.

The materials for WCD were written by Shirley Atencio and Bettie Durrah and can be obtained from the National CWU website.

The 2018 Celebration theme “**Reaching Toward Wholeness,**” reflects the idea that wholeness requires feeling safe, cared for, valued, and connected within our local community and the larger world. In continuing our study on “Wholeness”, World Community Day focuses on being “**In Harmony With God’s People.**” Like many voices coming together in a grand chorus, people of many cultures and nations can come together to lift humanity above the brokenness of discord, political unrest, and racial and cultural insensitivity. Throughout history, music and rhythm have been used to communicate, to teach and to unite. This year’s worship service weaves together music and the need for human understanding and connection.

In our Richland County Unit we will be celebrating World Community Day as we have been for a number of years at Schmitt Woodland Hills, a senior living community. This makes it possible for women who have been part of our group in the past to participate. Beverly Burns from St. Johns ELCA Lutheran church has been working on this program

since last May and will have some pleasant surprises for us.

It should be possible to head in many different directions with this great program. Have fun with it!

Don’t forget to complete your Celebrations Report Forms and send copies of them to me at Eleanor Siebert, 1930 Hillside Drive, Richland Center, WI. 53581

(Celebration Report Form can be found on the National CWU webpage:

http://www.churchwomen.org/index.php/about/resources/)

Nominations Committee Report

The following listed women were elected at our state meeting September 15, 2018.

Susan Becker—Second term Nominating Committee

Gloria Carter—Second term Policy & Bylaws Committee

Kathy Weeks—Second term as Chair of Communications

Gloria Higgins—First term on Nominating Committee

The present officers are to continue serving:

Carol Lange, President; Marilyn Verkuilen, Treasurer; Shirley Jackson, Ecumenical Action; Eleanor Siebert, Ecumenical Celebrations; Kris Clausing, Chair Finance Committee; Sue Coghill, Historian; Hazel Christopher, Nominations.

Thanks to those who will be serving on our State Board. Your gifts of time and talent are greatly appreciated.

We are in need of a Vice President/President Elect, Secretary, and Ecumenical Development Coordinator. Please contact us if you are willing to serve in one of these positions.

Hazel Christopher, Nominations Committee Chair

Susan Becker, Member of Committee

.....Peace and Justice / Wisconsin Council of Churches.....

End Child Poverty Campaign

Children are among the most vulnerable people in Wisconsin.

According to the **End Child Poverty Wisconsin** campaign, one in every six Wisconsin children lives in poverty, and racial disparities make the climb for equity even more difficult for children of color.

A July 18 update on the End Child Poverty Wisconsin website (www.endchildpovertywi.org) focuses on the latest report from the UW Institute for Research on Poverty. According to the most recent data available (2016), while the state was adding jobs overall, those in poverty were not sharing in the economic expansion and child poverty actually increased. The report states: **"The vast majority of people living in poverty are part of working families, and many work multiple jobs. The problem is that the wages they earn, and the number of hours they are able to work, keep these working families in poverty."**

End Child Poverty Wisconsin is a campaign led by the WI Council of Churches, WISDOM, Citizen Action of WI, and Kids Forward, to cut child poverty in Wisconsin in half in the next 10 years. Using evidence-based efforts that work across political and economic boundaries, projects similar to the End Child Poverty Wisconsin campaign have succeeded in other countries in transforming the conditions that trap people in poverty. We can transform the lives of children and their families here in Wisconsin. As Church Women United, one of our Quadrennial Priorities focuses on hunger and poverty, particularly child hunger.

End Child Poverty Wisconsin is looking for 10,000 people to sign on to this vision of cutting child poverty in Wisconsin. Those of you who attended the CWU State Assembly heard me speak about this

campaign and some of you signed the sheets I had there. **For those who haven't yet signed on, you can add your signature and join the campaign for a whole and healthy future for all of Wisconsin's children at endchildpovertywi.org.**



Voter Resources

Democracy is not a spectator sport. Voting is a right and responsibility. **The Wisconsin Council of Churches offers voter resources for congregations and individuals on its website:** <https://www.wichurches.org/resources/voter-resource/>

On the next page, I have taken some information from the **2018 Voter Education Guide** which can be downloaded from the website. These "Christian Principles in an Election Year" were developed by the National Council of Churches USA's Justice and Advocacy Commission and were approved by the NCC's Executive Committee.

Gloria Carter, CWU Representative to the Peace and Justice Commission of the WCC
carter53597@tds.net

Christian Principles in an Election Year

Your church, your communion, and the National Council of Churches USA do not endorse any political party or any candidate. Be that as it may, our Christian faith compels us to address the world through the lens of our relationship to God and to one another. Public discourse is enhanced as we engage civic leaders on the values and ethics affirmed by our faith. At the same time, religious liberty and the integrity of our democracy will be protected as candidates refrain from using faith-based organizations and institutions for partisan gain. We offer these 10 principles to those seeking to accept the responsibility that comes with holding public office.

1. War is contrary to the will of God. While the use of violent force may, at times, be a necessity of last resort, Christ pronounces his blessing on the peacemakers. We look for political leaders who will make peace with justice a top priority and who will actively seek nonviolent solutions to conflict.

2. God calls us to live in communities shaped by peace and cooperation. We reject policies that abandon large segments of our inner city and rural populations to hopelessness. We look for political leaders who will re-build our communities and bring an end to the cycles of violence and killing.

3. God created us for each other, and thus our security depends on the well being of our global neighbors. We look for political leaders for whom a foreign policy based on cooperation and global justice is an urgent concern.

4. God calls us to be advocates for those who are most vulnerable in our society. We look for political leaders who yearn for economic justice and who will seek to reduce the growing disparity between rich and poor.

5. Each human being is created in the image of God and is of infinite worth. We look for political leaders who actively promote racial justice and equal opportunity for everyone.

6. The earth belongs to God and is intrinsically good. We look for political leaders who recognize the earth's goodness, champion environmental justice, and uphold our responsibility to be stewards of God's creation.

7. Christians have a biblical mandate to welcome strangers. We look for political leaders who will pursue fair immigration policies and speak out against xenophobia.

8. Those who follow Christ are called to heal the sick. We look for political leaders who will support adequate, affordable and accessible health care for all.

9. Because of the transforming power of God's grace, all humans are called to be in right relationship with each other. We look for political leaders who seek a restorative, not retributive, approach to the criminal justice system and the individuals within it.

10. Providing enriched learning environments for all of God's children is a moral imperative. We look for political leaders who advocate for equal educational opportunity and abundant funding for children's services.<sup>[P]
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Finally, our religious tradition admonishes us not to bear false witness against our neighbor and to love our enemies. We ask that the campaigns of political candidates and the coverage of the media in this election season be conducted according to principles of fairness, honesty and integrity.

More Assembly News and Photos

A big "Thank You" goes out to Pearl Mertens for the lovely Christmas ornaments she presented to participants at the 2018 State Assembly in Fond du Lac.



Past President Gloria Higgins visits with Assembly participants.



Marilyn Verkuilen registered Assembly participants.



Rosemary Helmer of the Fond du Lac Unit welcomed the 2018 CWU Assembly.



Regional CWU Director Judy Reimer and Assembly Chairperson Kris Clausing

Mission Project Total
40 food items and \$866
were collected and presented to the
Fond du Lac Salvation Army
Thank you for your donations!

