

Church Women United in Wisconsin

Fall 2019 Newsletter: Volume 65, Issue 4



"Caring for God's Creation" ... An Assembly to Remember

Church Women United in Wisconsin's Annual Assembly was held at Holy Wisdom Monastery, Middleton, on September 7. Fifty women travelled from around the state to be part of the gathering, guided by this message from Psalm 24:

"The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord."



Holy Wisdom Monastery provided a welcoming, peaceful setting for the retreat-like program. We learned how the monastery community lives out its commitment to care for the earth by maintaining an energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly facility and a restored native prairie landscape. We appreciate the gracious welcome from the monastery staff and the wonderful lunch, which included food grown in the monastery gardens!

The program explored the beauty and perfectness of God's creation – and our

part in it. We were reminded of our heritage of stewardship of the earth through Bible studies and were challenged to make personal commitments to care for our world. We also thought about how we care for each other and ourselves, how to "find spiritual time in a busy world." Lovely music and hymns were woven into the program.

The Church Women United portion of the day included a Memorial Roll Call to remember CWU sisters who died in the last year. The Annual Business meeting addressed financial issues and need for additional members for the state board. A draft of a public statement regarding treatment of people at the southern border was discussed. Board members for 2019-2020 were elected and installed. It was a blessed day!



Assembly Photo Album

Some arrived at the monastery on Friday in advance of the Assembly. Before bedtime the group gathered to share Name Stories and Creation Stories.



Carol Lange, President of CWU in Wisconsin, opened the Assembly Saturday morning with this scripture reading:
“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.” – *Lamentations 3:22-24*
Carol was an *ex officio* member of the Assembly Planning Committee and presided at the afternoon Annual Meeting.



“Patti Prizes” (door prizes) for Sue Coghill, Carol Lange and Lynn McDonald.



Special guest Patti Polk, CWU National President, brought us her wisdom, spiritual

strength, warmth and encouragement. She led the Memorial Roll Call and spoke on “Finding Spiritual Time in a Busy World.”

Vision of Holy Wisdom



Patti Prize to “Oldest Person Attending Today” goes to Faith Bauman (age 97).



Sister Lynne Smith, OSB, is one of the Benedictine Sisters at Holy Wisdom Monastery. Sr. Lynne, raised and ordained as a Presbyterian minister, is the first Protestant woman to join the Benedictine Women of Madison, realizing her childhood dream of someday being a nun!

Sister Lynne described the activities and spiritual practices of the sisters at the monastery. She also told of the origins of the present-day monastery and how the community strives to care for its place on the earth.

The new monastery building is highly energy-efficient and its construction includes remnants from the previous building so that very little went to waste. In addition, a native prairie was painstakingly planted on the grounds over several years. The deep roots of the prairie plants are able to hold water so that flooding is no longer a concern for the neighboring properties and roads.



Sister Lynne and Patti Polk.

Care of God's Creation

Michele Hopp, Pastor of Arlington and Poynette Inch United Methodist Churches, led us through a Biblical understanding of Creation and our part in care for Creation.

We read in Genesis about the World's Creation in seven days. Each day, God saw how good it was.

After the sixth day, God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good. On the seventh day, God rested and made this day holy.

We also read the account in Genesis 2 of the creation of the garden in Eden with every beautiful tree with edible fruit and the creation of the humans Adam and Eve to care for the garden.

Pastor Michele shared rules from the Torah for caring for Creation, such as honoring the sabbatical year to give the land a Sabbath rest to the Lord. The Torah also advises against polluting the land in which you live.

We then read the passage in John 20 where the risen Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene in the garden. Mary thinks Jesus was the gardener ... we can think of Jesus as the new Adam and the Resurrection as the new Genesis story.

Caring for Creation: Pastor Michele helped us think about personal, every-day choices we make which impact our world and she challenged us to be mindful of our lifestyles, to make changes when and where we have choices.



Kris Clausing, CWU in Wisconsin Finance Chair and member of the 2019 Assembly Planning Committee, reminded us of the Benedictine values of justice and care for creation as lived out at Holy Wisdom Monastery. And the very first stories in the Bible which tell us about the creation of our world. As women of faith in today's world, we are called to honor and protect our earth home in every way we can. Kris asked each one present to prayerfully decide on a personal promise to care for creation – maybe a lifestyle change or a change in attitude or a social or political action – that she will commit to in the days to come. Each person was given a 3x5 card and a small leaf on which to write her commitment.

Kathy Maldegen, pianist and song leader, led us in singing “Touch the Earth Lightly” while each considered her commitment to creation. Kathy is a member of Madison CWU and a church musician in the Madison area. We appreciate the musicianship she brought to the program, throughout the day.



Care of God's Creation The Tree of Life

Everyone received a 3x5 card for writing down a personal commitment to Creation. In addition, each was asked to think of a keyword to describe her commitment and write it on a small leaf. The individual leaves were hung on the lighted "Tree of Life" – a symbol of the commitments from our group.

Here are the commitments made by women at the Assembly:

- * Remember to carefully cut the rings on plastic straps which hold together soda cans, to prevent animals getting trapped in the rings
- * Cut up old sheets to use in place of paper towels
- * Be more aware of what I'm doing to the earth
- * Help children learn to help their elders, to be polite
- * Give reusable grocery bags to my relatives and friends
- * Continue to take my cloth shopping bags when I go to the store
- * Bring my own container to the restaurant to take home the leftovers
- * Speak up about litter on roadsides, especially plastic bags, and pick up litter on walks
- * Help my church change from wastefulness to honoring God's creation
- * Buy veggies and fruit without packaging
- * Keep my own coffee cup at church for fellowship hour



- * Reduce use of paper towels
- * Plant more trees and shrubs
- * Use fewer trash bags
- * Don't buy plastic straws
- * Use LED light bulbs
- * Bring my own cup for coffee
- * No more plastic water bottles
- * Bring my own cup for coffee
- * Wash clothes in cold water more often
- * Reduce use of fast food containers
- * Grow a vegetable garden in pots
- * Conserve water (especially hot water)
- * Recycle, recycle, recycle
- * Use refillable water bottles
- * Use less plastic
- * Recycle plastic bags
- * Less meat in my diet
- * Use refillable water bottles
- * Waste less food
- * Recycle ink cartridges

Assembly Planners Sue Coghill and Kris Clausing with the "Tree of Life"

Remembering CWU Sisters

Memorial Roll Call: Patti Polk and Kris Clausing led a time of remembrance for our CWU Sisters who died in the last year. Candles were lit for these friends as their names were read aloud. We give thanks for the women who have shown their love for God and our world through Church Women United.



Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Church Women United in Wisconsin was held in the afternoon of the Assembly day. All women in attendance are considered members of the Annual Assembly and are encouraged to participate. Carol Lange, CWU in Wisconsin President, presided at the meeting. She welcomed these units represented at the Assembly: Columbus, LaCrosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Platteville, Outagamie County and Watertown.



Business items:

- The proposed budget for 2020 was presented by Kris Clausing, Finance Chair, and Marilyn Verkuilen, Treasurer. Budget was accepted. (See pages 11-12 of this newsletter for Treasurer's Report.)
- The difficulty of recruiting state officers and board members was brought to the attention of the Assembly. The state board recommends suspending the current Bylaw regarding ***term limits*** for board members so that some women serving now can continue in office until replacements can be recruited. The recommendation was accepted.
- Nominations for state officers and board members were presented. The slate was elected.
- Patti Polk reminded us of the Quadrennial Assembly of National CWU to be held in Atlanta, GA in June. Units have been asked to support the Assembly with a financial gift. It is understood that some units will be able to do more than others. (See flyer on page 13 of this newsletter.)



Proclamation about issues at the Mexican border:

Lynn McDonald, CWU's representative to the Peace & Justice Committee, Wisconsin Council of Churches, presented this statement for consideration: "We of CWU-Wisconsin wish to advocate for the humane treatment of children and families and others at the Mexican border. We support all people fleeing violence and injustice and we remember that our Lady Liberty welcomes all who come here in peace." By an informal show of hands, those present were supportive of the statement. It will be referred to the state board for follow-up.

Installation:

The final business of the day was Installation of officers and board members. Past President Dorothy Wetterlin conducted the installation for the women who were in attendance.



Pictured (left to right): Dorothy Wetterlin, Sue Coghill, Kris Clausing, Sr. Karen Flottmeier, Gloria Higgins, Carol Lange, Marilyn Verkuilen, Hazel Christopher, Shirley Jackson, Lynn McDonald

Assembly Thank-yous – We are grateful for:

Planning Committee: Gloria Carter, Sue Coghill, Kris Clausing and Carol Lange, *ex officio*

Morning refreshments provided by CWU in Madison

Presenters Sr. Lynne Smith and Michele Hopp and musician Kathy Maldegen

Welcome and special arrangements by the Holy Wisdom Monastery staff

Financial support provided by Liz Ringstad, Ripon, and the Marion Christensen Memorial Fund

All who attended this Assembly

More Assembly Photos



Kerri Parker,
Executive
Director of the
Wisconsin
Council of
Churches, meets
CWU President
Patti Polk



A native prairie garden along the walk
to the monastery building



Collecting the offering



Laura Pfeffer led us in singing the “Doxology”



Past President
Dorothy Wetterlin



Looking Ahead

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World Community Day

Typically observed on the 1st Friday in November – this year, November 1 – this celebration has been part of Church Women

United since the 1940s. World Community Day focuses on issues of Justice and Peace around the world.



CHURCH WOMEN UNITED
2019 World Community Day

**THE
TIME IS
NOW!**
“Resolve to Love”

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED IN WISCONSIN

Greetings to Our Fellowship from Carol Lange

October 16, 2019

Good afternoon,

I hope you are enjoying the autumn and a few days that are dry. I'm enjoying the beautiful array of autumn colors and the cooler evenings.

My reason for this short synopsis of the recent Board meeting is to give you information about decisions made and dates to mark on your calendar. We hope that we will have a news writer and editor in place soon.

- The 2020 Assembly and annual meeting will be held in Platteville, WI on September 26, 2020. Sr. Karen, vice president, and the Platteville unit will plan the day's events.
- The Board members present voted to grant the unit presidents full membership on the State Board. This was discussed earlier, but this action makes it official. In the past, Unit presidents were invited to attend Board meetings, but we wanted to have a closer relationship with them. Beginning with the meeting on March 12, 2020, we will welcome all unit presidents to the Board. This eliminates the need for the presidents' luncheon in the spring.
- We will hold some Board meetings in locations of our units and invite unit members to attend our Board meetings.
- We will continue to review and revise by-laws during the current biennium.
- The use of technology for committee meetings, unit meetings and State Board meetings will be studied.
- The April/May meeting will be in Milwaukee. Members of the State unit will work out program details.
- The August Board meeting will be in Platteville.

Until Later,

Carol M. Lange, President of CWU in Wisconsin

BEING GOOD STEWARDS IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Our outstanding Assembly program this year was on “Caring for God’s Creation.” The beautiful setting enhanced the momentum of the day, and the leaders helped us focus on the topic that is especially poignant for our time and place. The presentations made me to consider, “Am I a good steward of God’s creation?”

I am from a family of farmers, and we’ve always been dependent on the weather for our living and safety. My parents grew up during the dusty days of the 1920s and the great depression. Being good stewards of the land, saving and not wasting, protecting and not polluting, respecting and not abusing the environment were taught from generation to generation. I remember that Welches grape jelly glasses became our everyday water and juice glasses, Mother saved the waxed paper from cereal boxes, and whatever could be repurposed was saved and used.

Is being a good steward of creation related to climate change? Is it really happening? When I moved to Platteville over 20 years ago, I enjoyed afternoon or evening walks around my neighborhood, sitting in my backyard, and opening windows to a fresh autumn breeze. Those possibilities no longer exist for me. Yet, I live in the same house and in the same neighborhood. Something has changed. I have some ideas of what caused the change for me, but those are my private thoughts.

Greta, a young activist from Sweden, addressed the world leaders about climate change/justice at the UN. She and others are concerned about issues that didn’t face us when we were their age. Many others held rallies highlighting climate/weather issues. Concerned global citizens of all ages support these actions. The quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink, polluted seas, changes in plant and animal life and declining resources point to the uses and abuses of God’s creation.

Weather scientists caution that our thunderstorms, hurricanes and other severe storms might not be caused by climate change, but their severity is. Thus, indicating that the rise in temperatures and torrential rains we experience in Wisconsin may be the results of climate change. It is happening quickly, and at a rate that is much faster than anticipated.

Do I believe in climate change/global warming? Yes, indeed. I believe it is time to listen to the weather prophets around us. With God’s help, we can become better stewards of God’s wonderful creation.

Carol Lange,

President, CWU in Wisconsin

Church Women United in Wisconsin
2018 Income and Expense Report

Checking Account

Income

Local Units' Contributions	\$ 1,200.00
May Friendship Day (1/2 of unit's collection)	196.93
Individual Contributions	315.00
Collection at Annual Assembly	430.00
Newsletter Subscription (sent by mail)	10.00
Assembly Registration (41 @ \$25 + 1 @ \$10)	1,035.00
Nickels for National collected	27.09

Total Income **\$ 3,214.02**

Expenses

Contribution to National CWU	\$ 1,000.00
Membership/Contribution to Non-Profits	310.00
Contribution to Regional Coordinator	100.00
Cost of Basket for Regional Assembly	26.96
State President's Office Expenses	15.00
Newsletter Expenses	132.47
Website Software & Domain Name Annual Fee	100.00
Mileage to Quarterly Board Meetings	490.78
License/Registration Fee to State of Wisconsin	20.00
Nickels for National sent to National CWU	22.14
Cost of new checks from Bank	16.50
2018 Assembly – Custodial fee at church	150.00
2018 Assembly – Speakers, Presenters	145.00
2018 Assembly – Printing of booklets and handouts	155.72
2018 Assembly – Folders and inserts	74.72
2018 Assembly – Catering or donation to Host Unit	400.00
2019 Assembly – Prepayment to Holy Wisdom	615.00

Total Expenses **\$ 3,774.29**

Net Loss for 2018 – Checking Account **\$ 560.27**

Savings Account (Recognition and Memorial Fund)

Income

Interest accrued on Savings in 2018	\$ 0.16
Contribution for 2019 Assembly – Liz Ringstad	200.00

Total Change in Account – Net Increase **\$ 200.16**

Funds held by Church Women United in Wisconsin

Christensen Fund

The Marion Jane Christensen Fund was established in 1995 by her family to honor Marion's memory following her passing in May, 1995. Because of her long-standing commitment to Church Women United, the endowment fund specifically supports CWU for the purpose of assisting women in Wisconsin to attend seminars, conferences, and enrichment programs. This fund is administered by the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation.

Beginning in 2019 the Fund administrators annually will send 5% of the available money based on the value of the fund as of the previous December 31. This January we received \$388.80, which we deposited in our Recognition and Memorial Fund for use for this year's State Assembly.

We are thankful for this blessing.

The value of the Christensen Fund on December 31, 2018 was \$7,776.09

Recognition & Memorial Fund

Our State Board created the Recognition and Memorial Fund as a means of designating funds specifically to be used to assist women to attend seminars, conventions, training programs, etc.

The funds are held in a savings account and reported separately from the checking account and budget.

This fund is also an opportunity to give donations in honor of women in CWU, either past or present. This year we received \$388.80 from the Christensen Fund and a \$200 donation from Liz Ringstad, Ripon, Wisconsin. Ms. Ringstad was a founding member of the Ripon Unit of CWU and still is a strong supporter of the movement. Our State Board voted to use these donations to offset the cost of this year's assembly, thereby keeping the registration fee at \$25.

Value of the account on December 31, 2018 was \$200.16

The State Board has appointed a committee to oversee the Recognition & Memorial Fund incomes and disbursements. The committee members are Susan Becker, Kris Clausen, Beth Griesser and Marilyn Verkuilen. Additional members are welcome. If you are interested in serving, please see our Board President, Carol Lange.

Checking Account (see budget spreadsheet for detail)

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2018	\$ 5,975.22
Ending Balance, December 31, 2018	5414.95
Loss in 2018	\$ 560.27

Church Women United announces the 2020 National Assembly: "A Proud Past with a Clear Future"

Church Women United, Inc
475 Riverside Drive Suite 1926
New York, NY 10115

2020 Quadrennial Assembly

2020 VISION
EST. 1941
A PROUD PAST WITH A CLEAR FUTURE

Registration Now Open

June 11 - 14, 2020

Sheraton Hotel
165 Courtland St, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

**DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY
TO MEET, LEARN, AND SHARE IN OUR VISION!**

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Church Women United in Wisconsin Newsletter is published three-four times a year and focuses on issues of concern to Wisconsin women of faith, particularly those related to CWU's priorities and goals.

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