

# Church Women United in Wisconsin

Fall 2021 Newsletter: Volume 67, Issue 4



## Church Women United Celebrates World Community Day!

World Community Day began in 1943 from discussions at a meeting of denominational presidents and executive secretaries asking that a day be set aside in the fall for the study of peace by church women. Although many denominations were printing their own studies on the new world order, it was determined at this meeting that their unity would be strengthened on one day of united study.

World Community Day continues to emphasize peace but has been broadened to include justice, a vital partner of peace. The once clear categories of “domestic” and “foreign” were consciously blurred so the global scope of the wide range of problems

could be emphasized on World Community Day.

Fall is the season Church Women United gathers for World Community Day. Traditionally, World Community Day is celebrated on the first Friday of November. Since local units plan the service, check with Church Women United in your area for date and time for this special service.

Also ... World Community Day programs are being held virtually this year, so you may want to join women in a neighboring community (or state!) to be a part of World Community Day.

**World Community Day**

*"New Places, New Faces at the Table"*

**BECOMING**

**in 2021**

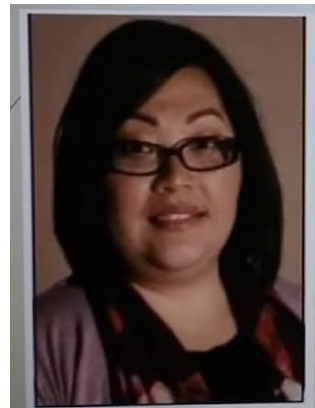
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## CWU in Wisconsin 2021 State Assembly

“As we explore today how to be truly about the work of the Divine in our world, we are challenged to be attentive to the subtle movements of the world around us and inside ourselves. We are challenged to be aware of what is happening, to be curious, and to explore the possibilities that lie before us.” (Sister Eileen Lang FSPA)

Sister Eileen Lang, Past-President of La Crosse Area CWU, introduced the 2021 State Assembly theme “Carry One Another’s Burdens,” based on Galatians 6:2, by challenging the 30 ladies present at this unusual virtual assembly to consider how we can better live with authenticity, integrity, and depth. She challenged us to consider the borders we have known and are comfortable with, and move beyond them - to stretch our perspective - especially our perspectives on women living on the margins of society who are often overlooked; the refugee trying to find her place in an unfamiliar and unaccepting culture; the battered wife or child - afraid to speak up; the homeless woman - afraid of losing her children; the women who have made unwise decisions and are now struggling to restructure their lives during and after incarceration.

Speakers Mao Kong, Sandra Hooser, and LaKisha Hudson all had intriguing personal stories that challenged us to stretch our perspective on the vulnerable and often voiceless within our society. Keynote speaker, Mao Kong, a Hmong refugee who emigrated to the United States at age eight, shared her compelling story of life in a refugee camp, and her struggles as she adjusted to life in a country where she did not understand language or culture, where she faced ridicule and abuse in school only to come home to more abuse. It was Mao’s own inner strength and her faith in God, that enabled her to overcome the many hurdles she faced. She now has a challenging and vital job in the health industry, is a community activist for victims of abuse, and works to promote cultural understanding in the La Crosse area.



Sandra Hooser, a Career Counselor in the parole system, and an educator in a women’s penitentiary, has worked many years, both professionally and as a volunteer, ministering to the incarcerated - especially women. Her descriptions of individuals who suddenly found themselves on the wrong side of the law, and her statistics of the number of women held in jails for long periods without even a trial, were shocking. Sandra related how unemployment impacted the probability that a woman would end up in jail, and yet unemployment was a common condition after being released - which greatly



increased recidivism. Sandra shared a list of ways we could get involved to help “share the burden,” including Circles of Support, mentoring programs, and advocacy.

LaKisha Hudson, a single mother of five, shared her story of being forced into homelessness when she could no longer keep up with her rent payments. She described



her attempts to remain invisible. She knew, that as a homeless woman, she was even more vulnerable than a homeless man. And her biggest fear? - losing her kids if her homeless status was discovered. La Kisha now works as an Independent Living Specialist and helps other homeless people navigate resources that can help them survive and overcome homelessness.

In addition to our diverse array of speakers, Marilyn Stone, President of CWU in Milwaukee, shared with us some of the interesting history of the 100 years their unit has been in existence. A short Memorial Service was also held to remember our CWU Sisters who have passed since our last assembly.

As always, our State Assembly includes an Annual Business Meeting. This was conducted by President Carol Lange. (You can learn about what transpired at the Business meeting by reading the Secretary’s report from the assembly.)



**Carol Lange**



**Marilyn Stone**

Many thanks go out to the Executive team from our host unit, the La Crosse Area CWU. Also, “Thank You” needs to be extended to Carol Lange, Kris Clausing, and Marilyn Stone who gave much advice and support throughout the planning process. Special thanks go out to Marilyn Stone who provided technical support and advice. Without her expertise, the assembly would not have gone so smoothly.

*Kathy Weeks*  
President, CWU in LaCrosse

Assembly Notes from Treasurer Kris Clausing:

Number registered: 30 people

Assembly collection: \$550.00

Mission Project Collection: \$525.00\*\*

\*\*This Assembly’s mission project is New Horizons, LaCrosse, serving those who have experienced domestic and sexual abuse.



## Milwaukee CWU Celebrates 100 Years!

This year the Milwaukee unit is celebrating its history as a unit for 100 years. Wisconsin Church Women United joins with Milwaukee women in celebrating this milestone. Highlights of Milwaukee CWU's history are being presented in this year's state CWU newsletter.

### ***Milwaukee Church Women United, 1943 - 1969:***

Mrs. Laura Tonkin served as president, 1943-47. Under her leadership a study of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization) took place. Mrs. Tonkin gave numerous talks on the United Nations and urged full U.S. participation in the World Court. Milwaukee CWU celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1946.



Mrs. Luella Rilling served as president 1947-51. A CWU choir was formed in 1948 with Mrs. Ruth Bockelmann as its first director. Milwaukee served as host to the 1948 National Assembly, known as the "Assembly of Flowers," attended by women from across the U.S., Canada and many foreign countries. In 1950 Milwaukee Church Women joined other women across the nation by donating \$1.00 each to the Ecumenical Register, when the church women became a department of the National Council of Churches.

Mrs. Kathryn Brown became president in 1951, serving until she became Wisconsin Church Women United president in 1953. In November 1951, the name changed from Milwaukee County Council of Church Women to United Church Women (UCW) of the Milwaukee Area.

Mrs. Nola Frick served as president 1953-55. During her presidency, at least twelve projects were initiated and/or continued, including: financing a part-time hospital chaplain; choirs; Sunday afternoon calls made to the Detention Home; Christmas program and contributions; monthly visits to Children's Hospital by young people for games, songs and stories with patients; camp for underprivileged children; supporting the Armed Forces; World Fellowship Institute; World Day of Prayer; May Friendship Day and World Community Day.

Mrs. Bertha Candy served as president, 1955-59. Under her leadership UCW of Milwaukee received an "Award of Merit" from the Milwaukee County Citizenship Commission.

Mrs. Irma E. Estes served as president 1959-61. For World Community Day the women collected clothing, school supplies and medicines for Church World Service and World Medical Relief. In 1961 the choir consisted of 30 members who sang at monthly UCW meetings.

Mrs. Margaret Bond was president 1961-64. In 1962 there were 100 churches from 12 denominations affiliated with UCW, with 1028 members. Also in 1962 an evening group was formed to allow women who were unable to attend daytime meetings an opportunity to be involved in UCW. "Operation Cookies" project donated homemade cookies that were distributed to patients at the County Mental Institutions.



Mrs. Mary Williams served as president 1964-66, followed by Mrs. Grace Abramson, 1966-69. In October 1967 the name was changed to Church Women United of Milwaukee.

*Thank you to Marilyn Stone, Milwaukee CWU President, for these interesting pieces of history.*