

Church Women United in Wisconsin

Spring 2021 Newsletter: Volume 67, Issue 2



President's Letter

"Let Us Go to the House of the Lord"

After spending Sunday mornings watching worship services on television or listening to church services on audio zoom, I attended a live worship service at the First English Lutheran Church in Platteville, WI. My own church was still closed, but I felt a need for face-to-face worship with other Christians. I called the church earlier that week to find out the COVID restrictions and if there would be room for a visitor. While visiting with the church administration assistant, I found out about the restrictions and signed up to worship there on Sunday.

It was Palm Sunday. The prelude consisted of familiar hymns of the season, and I sat back in the pew to enjoy the music. As I listened, I was gripped by an unusual feeling and, as tears filled my eyes, I said over and over to myself "I'm in church this morning. How good it feels to be in church this morning." I can imagine it will feel that way in heaven when we gather around the throne of God. The sermon was wonderful, the communion service was special and the spirit led me through the amazing service.

I didn't realize the impact that the service would have on me that morning. Attending church on Sunday mornings was something that felt natural to me, and it had been my practice over time. So, no big deal, right? But that morning was different. I can't quite put it into words except that the feeling was uplifting, and it still resonates as I worship.

A scripture verse that kept threading through my mind is from Psalm 122: 1. "I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord." I didn't simply read or memorize that scripture on Palm Sunday, I lived it.

Since then, I have been "church hopping." I watched a filmed dramatization of Mary Magdalene on Easter morning, observed confirmation in a Lutheran Church, and shared communion with believers in the United Methodist and Lutheran traditions.

Psalm 122 is a Psalm of David. Community worship was the practice of the people of the Hebrew Bible (OT), and Psalms were a very important part of that service. I believe this is particularly noticeable here, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the

house of the Lord. Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem— built as a city that is bound firmly together, to it, the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.” (Psalm 122:1-4)
As the requirements of the pandemic ease and you experience worship face-to-face with other believers, be glad as you go to the house of the Lord. “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, and bless his name.” (Psalm 100:4)

Stay healthy, happy and safe,
Carol Lange

Remembering Barb Brockman

We are saddened to learn of the death of Barbara “Barb” Brockman on March 8, 2021. Barb was a President of Church Women United in Wisconsin and truly enjoyed the friendships of other women of the Christian faith through the Church Women United movement.



Barb served the Sparta school district as cook for 18 years and also in leadership of the Wisconsin School Food Service Association, winning numerous commendations for her involvement. In retirement Barb enjoyed volunteering in the Sparta community where she was active in Sparta’s cancer support group and served as secretary of the Eagles Auxiliary. She is survived by her son Rodney, grandson Robert and daughter-in-law Wendy.

Prior to joining the state board Barb served as president of the Sparta CWU unit for 12 years. Barb served as CWU in Wisconsin Vice-President for 2009-2011 under President Dorothy Wetterlin and as President for 2011-2013. As Past President Barb served on the Nominations Committee. She was able to attend the National CWU Gathering at Independence, MO in 2008 and the 2011 National Assembly in Atlantic City, NJ.



After retiring from the CWU board, Barb and Dorothy Wetterlin stayed in touch, continuing their friendship until Barb’s death. Of her friend Barb, Dorothy says, “she would give what she could to care for another ... she was a delight.”

Barb always looked forward to the CWU spring board meeting and Presidents’ Luncheon in Madison to renew her ties with friends in Church Women United. We will surely miss her warm welcomes and easy smiles!

Barb with Wisconsin’s banner at the opening ceremony for CWU’s Assembly in Atlantic City, 2011.

CWU Assembly to be hosted by LaCrosse Unit

October 9 - Save the date!!

The 2021 State Assembly for Church Women United in Wisconsin is scheduled for October 9th. The theme for the assembly, based on Galatians 6:2 "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the love* of Christ", focuses on women in our communities that are often overlooked and have little voice; the homeless, the abused, the incarcerated, the exploited. Our hope is, that through awareness, compassion, and community support, these women - all women - will experience the realization that they are "Never Alone".

Our main speaker, Mao Kong, will give you a compelling and passionate story of hard work, resilience, and faith - from a woman that could easily be one the many voiceless women that struggle socially, economically - and spiritually.

Mao was Kong was born in a Thai refugee camp and immigrated to the United States at nine years of age. Despite many obstacles, Mao was able to earn a degree in nursing, and was soon promoted to be Clinical Manager for Urgent Care at Gundersen Hospital. Her strong managerial and leadership skills enabled her to be invited to help establish and head up the Covid Triage Department for Gundersen.

Though Mao's personal story is inspiring, she is a compelling and passionate speaker on diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the La Crosse area, Ms. Kong has been an advocate and a fierce defender of domestic violence survivors. She has extensive experience working with people of different cultures and backgrounds. For the past ten years, Kong has partnered with Gundersen Health System, local colleges, the Greater La Crosse Area Diversity Council, and other organizations to empower and educate people about diversity, equity, and inclusion. She has been the recipient of several community awards for her work and compassion, including the Rising Stars Award and YWCA's Outstanding Young Woman Award.

A more complete biography of Ms. Kong will be printed in the 2021 Assembly booklet. You will not want to miss this presentation and the opportunity to meet this outstanding young woman.

In May, the State Board will be making the decision whether we will hold the assembly in person, or if it is to be a virtual event. Never-the-less, whether in person, or on-line, this assembly will be an engaging opportunity to connect with Church Women from across the state. So, save the date - Saturday, October 9th! A brochure and registration materials will be available later in May.

Highlights of the CWU in Wisconsin Board Meeting

The WI State Board of Directors met via Zoom on March 11, 2021. Six of the eight units were represented.

Topics discussed were:

- Minutes of the annual meeting.
- Treasurer's report.
- Update on the 2021 Assembly and annual business meeting.
- WI Council of Churches report focused on getting COVID distributed.
- Noted reactivating our relationship with the WI Network for Peace and Justice.
- Nominations Committee is contacting potential candidates for positions.
- By-laws Committee members are Marilyn Stone (chair), Gloria Carter and Hazel Christopher.
- The need for and possibility of purchasing liability insurance.
- Use of Zoom for meetings and other contacts and renew our license.
- Next virtual Board meeting will be May 13, 2021.

Win Wednesday is a Winner for Me

Our National president, Mira Washington, instituted a Win Wednesday program where CWU sisters connect virtually each Wednesday for an informal meeting. I've rarely missed Wednesdays and here are reasons why.

- It gives me an opportunity to meet with other women of faith.
- The topics are relevant and informative.
- My thoughts are challenged as I listen to different points of view and perspectives.
- I have time to chat with my friends from coast to coast.
- I'm fitting names and faces together as my circle of friendship grows.
- It's been important to feel connected during these COVID days of isolation.
- The feeling that I am part of something larger and beyond myself.
- Won't you join me this week? The information is on the National website.

If you have questions about the unit meeting or Win Wednesday or just to chat, here is my contact information. Email: langec@uwplatt.edu or Phone: 608-348-4588

A friend in faith,

Carol

Dr. Carol M. Lange, President of the WI Unit of the Church Women United Fellowship

Milwaukee CWU Celebrates 100 Years!

Congratulations to Church Women United in Milwaukee on your 100th anniversary! Wisconsin CWU joins the Milwaukee unit in celebrating this milestone.

Thanks to Marilyn Stone, Milwaukee CWU president, for sharing her history of Milwaukee CWU in their monthly newsletter. Portions of Marilyn's articles will be presented in Wisconsin's newsletter during this year.

Just a little background: Most of us recall that National CWU marks its beginning as December, 1941, at the start of World War II. So this year will be CWU's 80th anniversary! The roots of our movement are much deeper, though.

In the late 1800s, women's missionary societies observed days of prayer for foreign missions and home missions – the origins of our World Day of Prayer. In the early 1900s women came together to form local groups across denominational lines – Federated Church Women – which stressed social service as well as mission. It is in this form that Milwaukee CWU was first organized. By 1941, the strands of mission societies – home and foreign – and federated groups were unified to form the United Council of Church Women, known today as Church Women United.

The first year of Milwaukee CWU:

It was on February 3, 1921, that the *Federated Church Women of Milwaukee* was founded, which later became *Church Women United – Milwaukee Unit*. The organization of the Federated Church Women of Milwaukee was the outcome of both the knowledge of a need and a vision of accomplishment. The idea was conceived at the meeting of a women's circle of Westminster Presbyterian Church. One of the members, Mrs. Arthur Bartelt, told her husband of the seemingly impossible suggestion that all the Church Women in the city from all denominations organize, so that they could do more effective witnessing and gain the support for necessary and worthy reforms in the city. Mr. Bartelt encouraged her to pursue this dream and even wrote the first charter.

A letter of invitation was mailed to pastors of 76 protestant churches. Portions of the letter read: "The undersigned women, constituting a committee appointed by Beta Missionary Society of Westminster Presbyterian Church, ask your interest in a movement for the organization of the women of the churches of Milwaukee in a Federation or Council ... This organization would seek to unite the influence of the women of the churches and bring this influence to bear on problems of law enforcement and moral welfare, and upon other inter-denominational activities ... No official would ignore the petition of the enfranchised Christian women of this city if they should ask him to do his part in enforcing the law against any existing evil such as violation of the prohibition laws, vice, uncensored movies, and gambling ..."

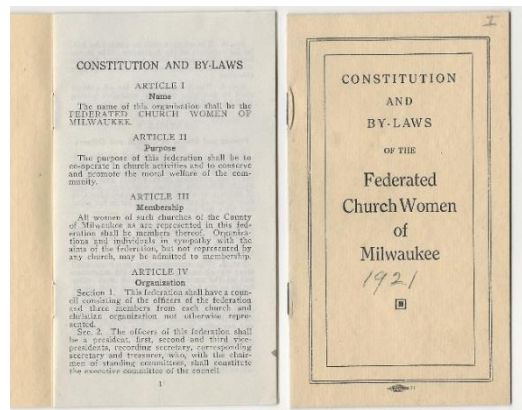
As a result of this letter, 269 representatives from forty-nine local churches and nine denominations attended an organizational meeting which was held in the First Methodist Church. This organization was welcomed by the women of the churches as a

channel through which their Christianity might definitely serve the community; as a way of applying to life the spiritual energy supplied by the power houses, the churches.

From its beginning, this new organization maintained a voice with power. Its early leadership was not only able to recognize the needs in and around Milwaukee, but also initiate ways to effectively respond to these needs. Mrs. Clinton Barr (first name doesn't appear in CWU historical records) of Westminster Presbyterian was elected the first president and Miss Mary Clarkson of St. Paul's Episcopal, first vice-president.

Documents indicate, "Membership consisted of all women of such churches of the County of Milwaukee as were represented in this federation. Organizations and individuals in sympathy with the aims of the federation, but not represented by any church, may be admitted to membership."

Officers were elected, with each becoming chairs of standing committees. According to the 1921 constitution and bylaws, the standing committees included: Church Activities, Community Welfare, Finance, Membership, Child Welfare, Law Enforcement, Legislative and Social Service. In its founding year, Council consisted of roughly 269 members, and they accomplished a multitude of things in a cooperative manner.



Mrs. Clinton Barr served as president from February 3, 1921, until June 27, 1922.



Circumstances made it necessary for her to retire early. During that year, Mrs. Barr was active in State Federated Women's meetings and made several appearances in Madison before the Petitions and Communications sessions of the state government to argue for education and public affairs matters. On behalf of the Federated Church Women of Milwaukee, Mrs. Barr was also active in working for the Temperance movement, ensuring that the National Prohibition Amendment passed, and also in the Legislature that governed Wisconsin residents.

Directly after organizing in the spring of 1921, the Federated Church Women began to participate in the movement to secure the services of police women for Milwaukee. During that summer, a resolution was passed urging such appointments and \$3,000 for the salaries of two police women was budgeted. By October 1922 the two officers were chosen and scholarships were obtained so that newly-appointed police women could participate in a four-month course in social work.

Just one month after organizing, an invitation was extended to the American Negro Churches of Milwaukee to become a part of the Federation. This major action led to the diversity that enriches our unit today.

Thank you to Marilyn Stone for permission to edit and print her articles about CWU in Milwaukee.