



St. Joseph's Catholic Women's League Newsletter – Christmas 2025

Dear Sisters in the League:

We are pleased to be sending you our Christmas 2025 Newsletter. We hope that our Newsletter finds you safe and well as we begin the new Liturgical Year.

CWL Executive and Standing Committee Reports:

A Message from our Co-Presidents – Kathi Colwell and Susan Conway Williamson

Advent is here! “It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus open the doors of hope”.

Mother Teresa wrote, “At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God’s own love and concern”

May all that is beautiful, meaningful and brings you joy be yours this Christmas season and wishing you the warmth of God’s embrace to surround you now and always.

We have celebrated this Jubilee year of Hope, with joyful expectation and continue our mission of *Creating Hope Through Action*. This is a special time of grace, renewal and hope.

We continue with synodal approach as a council. That means dialogue, mutual listening and communal discernment that aims to foster the desired result, a new way of being.

In this Jubilee year, in December, it is the Month of the Holy Family where we look to practice mercy and forgiveness and encourage forgiveness within the family and letting go of past hurts.

Sisterhood, belonging and membership are as important as ever. In the fall issue of the Canadian League, National CWL President, Betty Colaneri wrote, “In this changing world, League members are needed more than ever to show compassion and understanding and to be advocates for the vulnerable and marginalized.

Members are called to be God’s hands and feet in a world that so greatly needs the love of Jesus to carry on. The League’s faith pillar is the foundation of all that members do. The social justice pillar gives us the courage to take a stand. The service pillar gives us a sense of purpose in our actions. Together these form the heart of this incredible organization.”

We thank our precious members and executive for their dedication showing God’s love. In January 2026, we are ready for the new National CWL mission, *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission* as we grow together in faith and witness the love of God through ministry and service.

Please mark your calendars for the CWL 2026 Conventions:

Diocesan, April 25th – 26th, Kingston, Ontario

Provincial, July 5th – 8th, Thunder Bay Ontario
National, August 9th – 12th, Halifax, Nova Scotia
With much Joy and Gratitude,
Kathi Colwell & Susan Conway Williamson

A Message from our Treasurer – Cecile Dillon

This year has been both challenging and rewarding as I stepped into the role of CWL Treasurer. I discovered that the position involves much more than writing cheques—it requires balancing monthly records, attending meetings, maintaining member information, and managing the many charitable initiatives the CWL supports. Keeping spreadsheets current and preparing monthly reports has stretched my skills at times, but it has also allowed me to learn and grow. I look forward to each meeting and to sharing clear and accurate updates on the CWL's financial activity. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Development and Peace Program

Our 2025 fundraising goal for Development and Peace is \$200.00. I am pleased to report that, through the generosity of our members participating in the 1% Program, we have already surpassed our goal.

Your continued support ensures we can maintain this positive momentum. Thank you to everyone who has contributed, your generosity makes a meaningful difference.

Faith Ministry – Kathryn Nickerson (Chair), Sister Nancy Hurren and Karin Long

With a focus on spiritual growth and faith formation of our CWL members, Faith Prayer Services included: A Review of the Synodal Process; A Focus on End-of-Life Care; Pathways for the Implementation Phase of the Synod; Season of Creation; and In Remembrance and Gratitude. Complementing Father Cosmas's Jubilee Year 2025 Program, we prepared CWL poster boards that centered on the sacraments, as well as ministry and outreach.

In May, we coordinated a well-attended Palliative Care Day of Prayer. We also participated in Parish and Service Ministry events such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society Collection, Birthright Collection, Fancy Hat Tea Party, the Parish Multicultural Picnic, the Retired Priests /Former Clergy of St. Joseph's celebration, and the Rosary in St. Mary's Cemetery led by Father Cosmas.

In November, at our Deceased Members Mass, we remembered all members who have passed away and throughout the year. We joined our CWL sisters as Honour Guards to pray for our deceased sisters and we continue to pray for the intentions of our parish members, our school prayer buddies, our Indigenous sisters and brothers, and for members' personal intentions.

Service Ministry – Angel MacKinnon (Chair), Denise Irvine, Joan McCann and Maureen Plunkett

Our Service Committee continued to be very active despite the summer hiatus and unavailability of our Parish Hall. Much time in June/July was spent on temporarily relocating all our CWL files, spiritual items and entire inventory of event props, various campaign material, etc. – no small undertaking! When the renovations are complete, we then get to move everything back.

Another aspect of the renovations was that we had to find an alternative accommodation for our General and Executive meetings. Starting in early September, we have met twice a month in the Archdiocesan Centre across the parking lot from St. Joseph's Church. We thank the Centre for "taking us in". This, too, has involved

transporting meeting and hospitality supplies back and forth. All of these changes have been mostly seamless to date.

The Service Committee is responsible for organizing our various fundraisers during the year. However, we are not limited to this aspect of participation in our CWL. The money we raise allows us to contribute financially to the charitable organizations we support locally, provincially and nationally, and for bursaries to two graduating students at each of St. Thomas More and St. Paul Catholic Schools, to assist with the transition of attending Regiopolis-Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School or one of the other Catholic High Schools in the ALCDSB. We are also equally involved in outreach and support to our CWL members and St. Joseph's parishioners. We welcome any ideas/feedback you may wish to present to us.

On October 9th, Father Cosmas, St. Joseph's CWL and Knights of Columbus members, as well as parish staff, collaborated to provide a Thanksgiving Mass, Reception and Lunch to honour our retired priests, St. Joseph's former pastors/associates and deacon. The reception and lunch were held in the Rectory living/dining room which was beautifully decorated with a fall/thanksgiving theme. It was a very enjoyable day for all!

Invited guests able to attend were: Most Reverend Michael Mulhall, who concelebrated the Mass, Father Cosmas Ajawara, Father Mac Burke, Father Leo Byrne, Father Ed Debono, Father Louis DiRocco, Father Jack Grainger, Father Jan Kusyk, Monsignor Joseph Lynch, Father Brian McNally, Father Charles Ogbuagu, Deacon Bob Wojick and Father Francis Zambon. Father Tim Shea sent his regrets.



As part of the St. Joseph's Parish Jubilee 2025 and Pastoral Council, we were honoured to participate in a Mass celebrating Religious Life and Service of our Religious Sisters from the Congregation of Notre Dame, Sisters of Providence and the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. The Mass was held on Sunday, October 19th at 11:00 a.m. with a reception afterwards at the Diocesan Centre.



Our Annual Christmas Gift and Bake Sale had to be cancelled this year due to the ongoing renovations, but we were able to preserve part of the event with a Christmas Raffle. This was held on November 29th and 30th. Tickets were sold before and after each of the three Masses. We received a tremendous number of donations from CWL and parish members that allowed us to offer three fabulous gift baskets and one gift card wreath. The winners were announced after the 11:00 a.m. Mass on November 30th. They are: *Let's Party* (specialty foods) – P. Catry, *Just Chocolate* – Sister A. Brady, *In High Spirits* – S. Audet and Gift Card Wreath – A. Goudreau. This raffle was a huge success, thanks to all who contributed their time, generous donations and bought enough tickets to have our four jars almost overflowing. We raised an impressive \$2,710.00 and this will help us to “stay on target” financially, supporting many parish and community initiatives/organizations.



Other tentative upcoming events to take us through to June 2026: Annual Heart Fest (Bake and Gift Sale); Annual Lady of Good Counsel Mass and Dinner; 12th Annual Fancy Hat Tea Party; CWL Mass, Presentation of Service Pins and Pot-Luck Supper. Details of each event will follow closer to the event dates.

Social and Ecological Justice Ministry - Barbara Quinn (Chair), Rina Daechsel and Alice Gazeley

It has been a busy few months. Since our last Newsletter, we have had a number of informative, engaging Speakers.

In April, Alice Gazeley facilitated *An Introduction to the Synodal Process*. Through this process we are learning how to be a people of disciples and missionaries and how to walk together to be part of a Synodal Church.

In May, our speaker was Alysa Lafleur. She is a Registered Nurse and Clinical Educator at Providence Care Hospital. She has been a bedside nurse on the Palliative Care and Complex Medical Inpatient unit and then a Clinical Educator within the hospital working with many units, with the last few years on Palliative Care. She recently supported the opening of the A.B. Smith Homestead Hospice House.

In September we welcomed Sebastian Gomes, the Executive Editor of AMERICA, The Jesuit Review of Faith and Culture to talk to us about *The Implementation of the Synodal Process*. Sebastian emphasized that the Synodal Process initiated by Pope Francis and continued by Pope Leo XIV is one that builds a culture of sharing and consensus, one that builds bridges, encourages dialogue, mutual listening, discernment and welcomes all.

In October, Kiegan Irish, the Animator for Eastern and Northern Ontario with Development and Peace - Caritas Canada spoke to us about *Turning Debt into Hope*. Countries in the Global South face crushing debt - payments that keep them from investing in their people. At the same time, the Global North see them as an "ecological debt" for exploiting their resources and destroying their environment. This destruction drives climate change, which most adversely effects societies in the Global South that are the least responsible for it. October 1st was the International Day of Older Persons. This year the number of people 65 and older is expected to double making it crucial to implement policies that support healthy aging.

We remind members to contribute to the 1% Program. When members spend money on non necessities like going to movies or plays, take trips, going out to eat, buy new clothes, we invite you contribute 1 percent of what you spend. This money goes to Development and Peace to support women in poor and developing countries. Women are less likely to receive aid and more likely to go hungry. Programs also help prevent violence against women. Women are agents of change and supporting women is supporting peace and *Creating Hope Through Our Actions*. Finally, thanks to all who continue to support our ECO Program, by bringing such items a plastic milk bags, metal tabs off pop cans, plastic milk bags, egg cartons, etc. to our centre, located at the west end of the church. Rather than these items ending up in landfills, they are sent to end-user organizations who create new products with them. Thank you for being great Stewards of Creation!

Membership and Organization Committee – Mary Clancy and Pauline Scott

Our membership is currently at 128 members.

Our 2026 membership drive is scheduled for the weekends of **January 3rd and 4th, and 10th and 11th, 2026** with a member posted at each of the three church entrances ready to accept renewals at a cost of \$35.00. If you would like to volunteer for the membership drive, please call either Mary Clancy at 613-544-4190 or Pauline Scott at 613-331-3403.

Any member who is not able to renew their membership over these two weekends can place their \$35.00 in an envelope addressed to CWL, Membership. If there are any changes to your information please include a note with your payment. The envelope can be placed in the offering basket at Mass or mailed to St. Joseph Church, 392 Palace Road, Kingston, ON, K7L 4T3.

We encourage all members to spread the word to other women of the parish to become members.

Focus on one of our Charities - Feed The People

St. Joseph's CWL is a supporter of a number of Kingston charitable organizations. We are proud to help with the work of Michael and Michelle Schwarz and the dedicated volunteers of Feed The People (FTP). Members of FTP and St. Joseph's CWL include D. Irvine, S. Audet, M. Clancy, A. Gazeley, M. LeRay, J. McCann, K. Nickerson and K. Wolfe who volunteer their time and resources. Feed The People are open daily, in rain, snow and sunshine to provide a hot meal at noon and snack bags for later on. This organization is 100% volunteer run and 100% donation based.



If you would like to learn more about this important service, please contact Michelle Schwarz at 613-770-6333. Monetary e-transfers may be made to Michael Schwarz at mike.schwarz@kingston.net.

Have You Ever Wondered?

Have you ever wondered about the “new” maple tree, that is on the right side of the walkway leading to the Rectory? In 2020, the Catholic Women’s League of Canada was celebrating 100 years of service and we were asked to consider planting a tree or bush as a way to recognize this achievement. In the fall of 2021, Leona Cotnam, a long-time member of St. Joseph’s and the CWL, had recently passed away and her family offered to fund the purchase of a tree in her memory. As it turned out a long-standing maple tree had been destroyed during the previous winter and it was suggested that we plant the new tree where the old tree once stood. The tree was installed in October 2022 and blessed in September of 2023. We are pleased that our CWL maple tree is growing strong and tall, and that in the Fall of 2025 received its new plaque, recognizing the Cotnam family for honouring St. Joseph’s CWL in memory of Leona Cotnam.



CWL Memory Book

Since our last Newsletter, two of our long serving members have passed away.

Johanna Klaassen October 1, 2025

Maria Petronella Veenendaal October 31, 2025

May they, and all our deceased members, rest in peace

Please mark on your 2026 calendar the following Meeting dates, locations and times:

Saturday, January 3 rd	Membership Drive – 5:15 p.m. Mass, at St. Joseph’s Church
Sunday, January 4 th	Membership Drive – at all Masses, at St. Joseph’s Church
Sunday, January 10 th	Membership Drive – 5:15 p.m. Mass, at St. Joseph’s Church
Sunday, January 11 th	Membership Drive – at all Masses, at St. Joseph’s Church
Monday, January 12 th	General Meeting – Diocesan Center 7:00 p.m.
Monday, January 26 th	Executive Meeting – Diocesan Centre 7:00 p.m.
Monday, February 9 th	General Meeting – Diocesan Center 7:00 p.m.
Monday, February 23 rd	Executive Meeting – Diocesan Centre 7:00 p.m.
Friday, February 27 th	Stations of the Cross – St. Joseph’s Church (following the 5:15 p.m. Mass)
Monday, March 9 th	General Meeting – Location – TBA, 7:00 p.m. / Collection for St. Vincent de Paul
Monday, March 23 rd	Executive Meeting – Location – TBA, 7:00 p.m.
Monday, April 13 th	General Meeting – St. Joseph’s Church Hall, 7:00 p.m.
Monday, April 27 th	Special Mass – Our Lady of Good Counsel – 5:15 p.m., at St. Joseph’s Church / followed by dinner – TBA
Tuesday, April 28 th	Executive Meeting – St. Joseph’s Church Hall, 7:00 p.m.

As mentioned in the Service Committee Report, there will be other socials and details of the events will be announced closer to the dates.

2026 National Theme:



For the next two years, **Blessed are the Poor** (Matthew 5:3) has been chosen by the national/executive board as the focus for the national theme, ***Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission***. It encompasses a broad range of the poor—in spirit, of heart, in body—all in virtue, exemplifying Jesus’ mission of bringing good news to the poor.

- Taken from **CWL National Theme Activity Calendar – November 30, 2025**

Catholic Women's League Prayer

We humbly pray You, O God our Father, to bless
The Catholic Women's League of Canada.
Bless our beloved country, our homes and families.
Send Your Holy Spirit upon us to give light to our minds and strength to our wills
that we may know and fulfil Your great law of charity.
Teach us to share with others at home and abroad, the good things You have given us.
This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of our patroness,
Our Lady of Good Counsel.
Amen



**We would like to wish you and your family
a very Happy and Blessed Christmas and all of the best in 2026.**