

# THE ST. MICHAEL'S LEAGUE

Issue 24

CWLstmichlon@gmail.com

December 2024

## Message from our President Dorothy Solomon



I am retired. Do you automatically get an impression of what that entails? I do a few 64-piece jigsaw puzzles a day and at times I am so sure that I know where a piece should go, that I

am totally surprised when it fits somewhere else. I am 74 years old. Do you have an image in mind of what a 74-year-old retired woman who does puzzles looks like? I am a CWL member. You may be thinking, oh I know what that means because I am too. So, you know a few things about me and that a puzzle can surprise me.

The more I learn about the Catholic Women's League, the more astonished I am as I become aware of how little I know. So, I want to think of St. Michael's CWL members as a puzzle with each of us having a certain position with each one needed to complete the picture. It is practical to find the border pieces first to establish a framework. In terms of the CWL, the framework would be the Pillars of Faith, Service and Social Justice which reflect our core values. Based on these pillars we seek to live out the mission statement of being called by God to grow in faith through ministry and service. Therefore, all council interests and activities are reflected in some way by one of these standing committees. Once we understand this as our framework or border, all members can start to fill in and complete the picture.

Our St. Michael's CWL has a special place for every woman. We welcome all kinds of participation. Some members actively attend

meetings, engage in discussions and vote on motions. Some serve in the Pillars of Faith, Service and Social Justice as chairs or team members or in one-time projects. Meetings do not suit every woman for various reasons, yet we appreciate our members who help with special activities like the Christmas Market, pie making and bake sales. You make a difference with whatever time, talent and energy you can offer.

Perhaps you are very supportive of the League goals and want to keep informed about our activities. Members receive our emails, meeting minutes and newsletters. For some, the best way they can give to the St. Michael's Council is by prayer through daily, weekly or special mass participation. There are simply too many members to thank individually but know that you all matter to each other. You are all valued and appreciated. Thank you everyone for responding when God calls - Here I Am Lord, Send Me.

This could not be a December newsletter without mention of Advent and Christmas. Advent is an opportunity to deepen our longing and patient waiting for Christ, to pray and ponder deeply the Word of God, and most of all to be a reflection of the Light of the World. During the past years, who has not felt deeply the darkness and gloom of our world? We are people of light and hope whom God calls, and we respond, "Here I am Lord, send me." Wishing you happiness as you share God's gifts of peace, hope, and love with others this Holy Season. Shalom.

***"Here I am Lord,  
Send Me"***

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## Prayer Intentions

We have offered specific prayer intentions for each month, and we are asking not only each of our members, but also all the members of St. Michael's community, to bring these intentions to the Lord. Let us continue to lift one another up in prayer. Below are the intentions for the next two months.

**December:** Let us pray for the unborn, and their mothers.

**January:** As the colder months come upon us, let us pray for our brothers and sisters who are homeless.



Faith Chair Megan Young led us in the League Prayer and a candle prayer service for our deceased members at our November meeting.

## In Remembrance

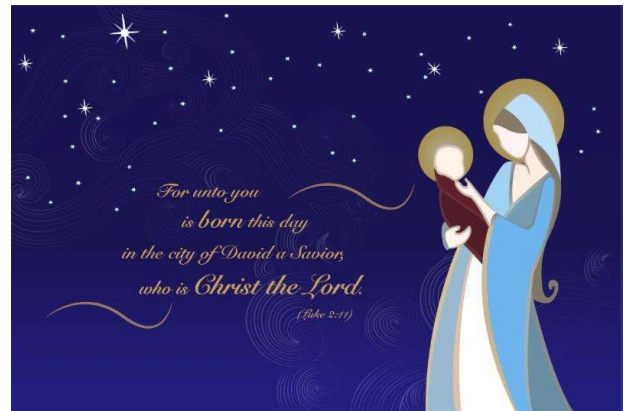
Marilyn Morgan



With fond memories of many shared experiences, we bid farewell to three of our League sisters this year. We ask that you hold them close in prayer as they are welcomed into God's heavenly Kingdom.

Rest in peace: Marlene Muckle who passed away December 13, 2023, Corry Kox who passed away March 16, and Jane Mastrandrea who passed away April 17.

We extend our deepest condolences to the families of these members and express our gratitude and appreciation for their many years of faithful service. Please keep them in your prayers.



May you have the spirit of  
Christmas which is Peace, the  
gladness of Christmas which is  
Hope, and the Heart of Christmas  
which is Love.

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## From Our Spiritual Advisor Fr. Felix Odobi Reawakened by Hope: "Pilgrims of Hope" in a Season of Hope



"Pilgrims of Hope" is the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025. As we anticipate the celebration of the Jubilee Year, we journey through another Advent season—a season of hope.

Hope is a universal yearning. "Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring" (Spes Non Confundit, No. 1). However, this knowledge of hope can often be clouded by our experiences and the troubling events around us, which can lead to feelings of worry, anxiety, fear, doubt, anger, and cynicism. Our experiences can either strengthen or weaken our hope.

There is a story of a mother who faced the devastating loss of her three high school children in a plane crash. Out of 110 onboard, 60 were students travelling home for Christmas. While eagerly waiting at the airport, the parents of these students were confronted with the tragic news: the plane had crash-landed and was engulfed in smoke.

When the mother learned that her children (ages 17, 15, and 13) did not survive the crash, she first became numb and passed out. Reflecting on her experience years later, she recounted how realizing that she would never see her children again overwhelmed her with a sense of hopelessness. In her unconscious state, she recalled

dimly the comforting words of Psalm 23:4: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." These words accompanied her as she gradually regained consciousness. The realization that God was with her gave her comfort and reason to continue to live. This inspiring story illustrates that even in our deepest hopelessness, there is a pathway back to hope—which involves meditating on God's words and promises.

When the light of our hope seems dimmed by life's difficulties, the news of the Messiah's birth—our incarnate God of Love and the fulfilment of God's word and promise—has the power to rekindle our hope. This news inspires us to persevere and enriches our desire to face our daily struggles and challenges with renewed strength. We are "pilgrims of hope," and every Advent season gives us the "opportunity to be renewed in hope" (Spes Non Confundit, No. 1) through God's words and promises.

Friends, let us embrace this season of Advent as an opportunity to have our hearts reawakened by hope. May we open our hearts to the Advent invitation to trust, journey, and anticipate with joy the coming of Emmanuel—God with us. May we, as "pilgrims of hope", bring light and love to a world yearning for peace and renewal.

I wish you a hope-filled Advent season!



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## Our Year In Review

Dorothy Solomon and Joan Lobsinger

At the Regional Presidents' meeting we were asked to submit a list of a maximum of 15 things our council did in 2024 for the upcoming Diocesan Convention. As you can see from the list below, 2024 has been a very busy year for St. Michael's CWL.

1. Our communications team has created and maintained a Facebook page.
2. The communications and membership teams developed our own Welcome to New Members package and a booklet on ways to be involved and it included a calendar of events and special dates.
3. Two members from the Social Justice Pillar serve on the parish Social Justice Committee.
4. Feeding those in need - several of our members volunteer at Hospitality North which is four local churches in our area who prepared a weekly meal for those less fortunate, and every Tuesday a number of our members prepared and delivered 100 peanut butter and jam sandwiches to Project Hope who pass them out to those in need.
5. We made small floral arrangements and delivered them to members who may have lost a significant family member, are homebound, or are living in a retirement and/or long-term care home.
6. We hosted the Crowning of Mary Ceremony in May and invited all parish members to join us.
7. We hosted the World Day of Prayer and four other denominations assisted in celebrating with 90 participants.
8. May Friendship Tea - our members prepared a free luncheon and there was entertainment from our ukulele players and singers. We invited CWL members and other women from the parish, as well as those living in retirement and long-term care. We also reached out to our homebound members. Some men joined too as they brought their Mom, Aunt or senior.
9. We hosted two family Trivia Fun Nights and a Dinner Dance in conjunction with the Knights of Columbus.
10. Our council organized five full days, one day a week for five weeks, for prolife witnessing during the 40 Days for Life campaign. All parishioners were encouraged to participate. We also promoted the one-day Life Chain witness Campaign.
11. Our council prepared Lenten Prayer Cards for parishioners to write a prayer request and in turn to take someone else's card home to pray for them.
12. We have written a bi-monthly newsletter which has proven to be very popular. It includes events with photos, stories, information and reminders of upcoming dates. We create ten pages on average.
13. A ukulele and singing group of about 20 members and friends entertained at local nursing and retirement homes during the Christmas season, and for special occasions like our Christmas meeting, and our parish Prelude to Christmas Concert.
14. We participated in special item collections like Socktober and Thanksgiving Appeal food Drive, London Pregnancy and Family Services, ANOVA, and My Sister's Place.
15. We held a Christmas Market, and several members assisted in planning and hosting the event. The proceeds were designated to Hospitality North, St. Vincent de Paul housing project, our local St. Vincent de Paul Society and other charities.

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## Fall Regional Day 2024

Several of our St. Michael's members were pleased to take part in this year's Fall Regional Day on Saturday, October 19th, hosted by Holy Trinity Parish, Woodstock. It was a positive day of learning and sharing with other CWL members, and our members were inspired and excited to share their experiences:

**Maggie McGee** - I had Joan L., Dorothy and Marg Riehl with me in my car and the drive there was quite scary as it was foggy. The day opened with mass celebrated by Father Paul Kim and the parish priest at 9:00 a.m. followed by refreshments. One of the presenters was the Diocesan Treasurer Mary Clare Latimer who gave us a guideline for doing this job. I found this interesting as when I was treasurer I had no training. For the fun part of it we played SNOWBALL, in which we went around the room meeting other ladies from different councils. Overall, I think it was a great day.

**Dorothy Solomon** - The highlight of the day was the opening mass with Fr. Paul Kim, our CWL Diocesan Spiritual Advisor, and the co-celebrant Fr. Dariusz Jagodzinski, pastor at Holy Trinity, Woodstock. The mass set the tone for the day as one of shared faith and hope. The opportunity to mingle and visit with women of the region gave me many insights as to how their councils were able to navigate the recent changes to pillars. The Diocesan Executives led us through a variety of helpful topics such as creating an annual calendar for budgetary spending. We have already established a good working plan for budget, and we also have a fine calendar of events to assist in planning our year. We are willing to examine other ideas and are willing to incorporate them. You may have heard the saying, "If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got." The presentation on recruiting, involving

and encouraging all members held some very positive tips. Our own members have valuable input to enhance our faith, service and social justice. Please reach out and share anytime.

**Joan Lobsinger** - I always enjoy attending our Diocesan Fall Regional Day; this year was no exception. Theresa Ryan, our Diocesan Past President's presentation "Engagement and Empowerment" was very interesting, and as our council's secretary, I particularly enjoyed Nelly Kelder, Diocesan Secretary's presentation, "Communication - Promoting the League." Nelly encouraged us to refer to ourselves as members of the Catholic Women's League of Canada rather than saying "I'm a CWL member." Renewing acquaintances, and meeting new ladies also makes the day a wonderful experience.



President Dorothy, receiving the membership certificate for St. Michael's CWL from Vice President Denise Lalonde Morris at the Woodstock Fall Regional Meeting.

Fear Not! Our Featured Member column will be back in February. If you have a CWL friend that you would like see featured in a coming issue, please email me at [gail-brown@rogers.com](mailto:gail-brown@rogers.com).

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## Membership News

Darlene Charette



*"The Catholic Women's League of Canada is many things to many people. Whether it's faith, service, social justice or sisterhood, thousands of women have found fulfillment by becoming members." (Cwl.ca)*

At St. Michael's CWL we held a successful Membership Drive along with the annual bake sale after the Masses on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>. Many members renewed their memberships at this time, and we also welcomed six new members and two potential members. We also had one member transfer from another council and two members who returned after an absence. At this time, we have more than 100 paid members, and the renewals continue to come in. Many

thanks to those who donated extra to help out a member struggling to pay the dues this year!

If you have not yet renewed your membership, simply put it in an envelope marked with 'CWL' and your name and drop it into the collection basket at Mass or send an e-transfer to CWLstmichlon@gmail.com. Membership is \$40 for the year.

As Dorothy mentioned at the November meeting, there are many ways of being a member. Some attend meetings, some take on leadership roles, some help out at various events throughout the year, some offer prayers, and some simply belong. All of these ways of being a member help us to have a strong voice and accomplish much together. Each member is valued and appreciated for her contributions, whether great or small.

The CWL theme this year is "Here I am Lord, send me." As you reflect over the Advent season, consider how you support the CWL and are supported by it. Below is a list of some of the many ways to become involved in the St. Michael Council. If you think you'd like to try out one or more of these opportunities, please let someone on the executive know or contact us at CWLstmichlon@gmail.com.

- Become a Member - \$40.00
- Executive Member
- Funeral Lunches
- Honour Guard
- Ukulele Group
- Yarning With Love
- Peanut Butter & Jam Sandwiches
- Newsletter
- Phone Tree
- World Day of Prayer
- 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care
- Spring Friendship Tea
- Crowning of Mary Ceremony
- Perennial Plants and Bake Sale
- Potluck Dinner and CWL Awards
- Christmas Market
- Apple Pie Making
- Fall Bake Sale
- Membership Drive
- CWL Christmas Social
- CWL and KofC Trivia Night
- CWL and KofC Dinner Dance
- St. Michael's CWL 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

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## SOCKTOBER Success

Marilyn Morgan



Special thanks to our CWL members and the many parishioners who donated warm, new socks for those in need. The collection box in the narthex had to be emptied several times as it overflowed with your contributions. A total of 297 pairs of socks and three pairs of gloves were collected by the time of our November meeting and will be given for distribution to Project Hope, Hospitality North and My Sisters' Place.



In addition, 69 more pairs of mostly children's socks were donated by a lady who attends evening masses. Along with the socks, there was a beautiful new child's winter jacket and a hat.

Bless you for your generosity to those experiencing homelessness.

## CWL / KofC Trivia Night

Gail Brown



Saturday, November 26th saw the return of the ever-popular Parish Family Fun Night and trivia game. The competition was fierce with 75 participants and a dozen teams battling for victory. The Archangels, Masse Bunch, Scooby Dudes, Wanna Wins, QTips and even the mighty Smartinis were no match for the winning Harry Cary Price Is Right Team, but the rivalry was friendly, and everyone had a great time. As usual, Steve Duncan kept us all scratching our heads with his tricky Noah Tall Trivia questions, the pizza and snacks were plentiful, and the evening was rounded out with a 50/50 draw and a silent auction for a pair London Knights tickets.



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## St. Michael's CWL Christmas Market - Thank You

Thank you to everyone who supported and contributed to this year's Christmas Market. Whether through donations, volunteer hours, or your continued encouragement, your involvement made this event a success. We are excited to share that with over \$13,000.00 in proceeds, we are able to provide financial support to Hospitality North, the SVDP Housing Project and the St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Michael's Parish. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us make a difference in our community. Your support plays a vital role in aiding those in need during this holiday season and beyond.





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## Apple Pie Day 2024

Joan Lobsinger



A huge **THANK YOU** to the 20 volunteers who helped on November 14<sup>th</sup> to make the apple pies for our annual CWL Festive Fall Bake Sale. Many hands

make light work, and this year we made two different sizes, a 10-inch pie and a 5-inch pie. Lots of smiling, chatting and camaraderie were a big part of our morning as boxes were folded, apples peeled and sliced, dough rolled, and pies were bagged and boxed. Donna Thompson proudly displays the first pie made and by 1:00 there were seventy-two 10-inch and sixty-one 5-inch pies in the freezer.



## Festive Fall Bake Sale



Our Festive Fall Bake Sale, held on November 30<sup>th</sup> & December 1<sup>st</sup> in conjunction with our membership drive, was a huge success. Thank you for your donations of baked goods, and to those who volunteered to price and sell the homemade treats and frozen apple pies. Also, thanks for purchasing at the sale. 😊 This year we also sold some Christmas items. After expenses, our profit was approximately \$1700.00.



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## CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Our members celebrated our sisterhood and the season with fun, food and Christmas carols at our annual Christmas Social on Saturday, December 7th. Gifts were exchanged with each other and members also generously donated baby items for the London Pregnancy & Family Support Centre. The SMUGlees were on hand to provide the music, and Christmas elves Lucie, Stephanie and Dorothy distributed the gifts.



**Dear Members of the Catholic Women's League, St. Michael's Parish,**

On behalf of the London Pregnancy and Family Support Centre, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Catholic Women's League at St. Michael's Parish for your generous support. Your recent contribution means so much to us and the families that we serve. Thanks to your kindness, we are able to continue our mission of supporting the critical needs of women, men and their families who may be struggling with challenges related to unexpected or in some cases, expected pregnancies.

We are truly grateful that you thought of the London Pregnancy and Family Support Centre. The gifts you have provided—diapers, wipes, clothes, baby wash, baby toys, blankets, and gift cards—will be a blessing to many of our families. We cannot thank you enough for this generous donation.

We wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas, and may God bless you all.

Thank you once again! with gratitude,

The Staff at the London Pregnancy and Family Support Centre