

**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region  
United Church Women**

***Theme: Embracing Change***

**Tuesday, May 5, 2021**



## EOOR UCW AGM Agenda

9:30 Zoom Room opens

9:45 Opening and greetings from Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region UCW  
Co-Presidents Kim Baird and Linda Stronski

### *Recite UCW Purpose*

*To unite women of the congregation for the total mission of the church and to provide a medium through which we may express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship and service*

9:55 Opening worship — Four Rivers

10:15 In Memoriam — Kim Baird

10:25 Entertainment/Skit — Seaway Valley

10:35 Book Review — Pat Gilmore

10:45 Break

### **10:55 REPORTS**

Co-Presidents' Report — Page 3

Leadership Report — Page 8

Resource Report — Page 8

Area UCW Reports — Ottawa Page 10; Four Rivers Page 10; Seaway Valley Page 11; Upper Valley Presbyterial Page 12

60th Anniversary Celebration — Page 12

Women for Change, Zambia Pages — 15-17

### **11:20 BUSINESS**

Motion to open business section of meeting

Motion: That all present from Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region UCW be voting delegates

11:30 Minutes of Inaugural Meeting, Saturday, September 28, 2019 (Pages 5-8)

11:35 Treasurer's Report 2019, 2020 and Budget 2021 — Kim Baird (Page 4)

Leadership Training — Charlotte Hoy

Summer Event — Kim Baird

Noon MOTION to discuss: That the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region UCW agree to embark on an educational/discernment process of becoming an Affirming Region



12:20 Nominations — Barb DeJeet — Page 13

New executive — Page 13

Swearing in of Executive — NUCW President Beulah Hayley

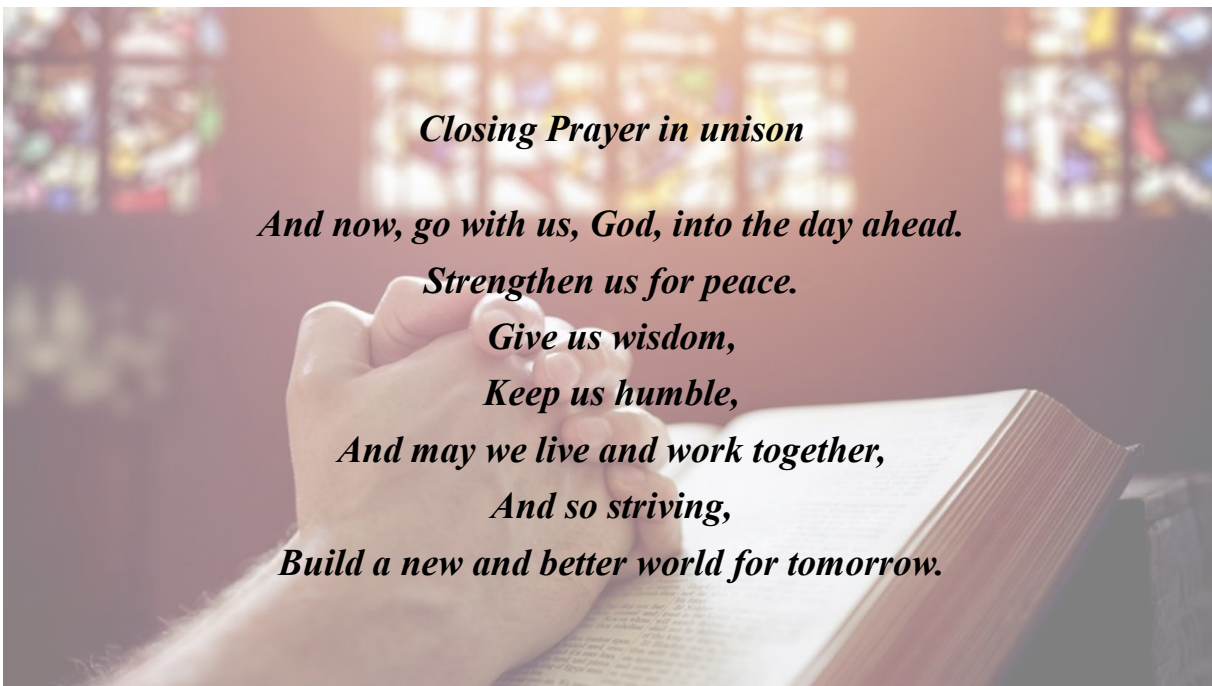
12:40 National UCW 60th and Grants

Motion to adjourn business portion:

Information from the floor

The next executive meeting of the EOR UCW is Tuesday, Sept. 7 at 9:30 a.m.

1:00 Adjourn



## ***President's Report***

EOOR UCW May 5 2021 AGM

Here's to saying goodbye to 2020 and welcoming 2021. A new year with new hope, new possibilities and yes, new challenges.

As Co-Presidents we bring greetings from the Regional UCW. These last few years have been difficult due to not being able to meet in person.

Embracing change has seen us move to Zoom meetings to maintain the work of the UCW. Our Executive has worked hard to keep up with the business of keeping us viable. We give thanks to all who serve in their roles to keep us on track on behalf of United Church Women at the Region, Area/Presbyterial and local levels.

September 2020 saw the National UCW fall gathering take place on Zoom for a week, three hours a day. It was uplifting to share time with UCW ladies from across Canada. Because of our gathering being on Zoom we were able to extend an invitation to all UCW members to join us for our Friday closing worship and communion led by Rev. Michael Blair, our new UCC Executive Minister. It was so good to see many of our Regional UCW women participate.

We are in our fourth of five years of our Anniversary project in support of Women of Change, Zambia. Thank you for the ongoing support of this this initiative. Thank you as well to the support of Mission & Service, and our Regional UCW Bursary Fund.

Looking forward to a time when we can get to know more of you and see the churches where you meet and worship.

***Linda Stronski & Kim Baird***

## ***EASTERN ONTARIO OUTAOUAIS REGION UCW FINANCIAL REPORT***

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2019</b>	<b>BUDGET 2020</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2020</b>	<b>BUDGET 2021</b>
Four Rivers	700.00	<b>700.00</b>	700.00	<b>700.00</b>
Ottawa	1,400.00	<b>1,400.00</b>	1,400.00	<b>1,400.00</b>
Seaway Valley	1,000.00	<b>1,000.00</b>	1,000.00	<b>1,000.00</b>
Upper Valley	700.00	<b>700.00</b>	700.00	<b>700.00</b>
Annual Meeting	914.00	<b>500.00</b>	0.00	<b>500.00</b>
WFC, Zambia	2,515.55	<b>500.00</b>	200.00	<b>500.00</b>
NUCW Resources	245.00	<b>1,268.00</b>	478.00	<b>1,268.00</b>
Mission & Service	425.00	<b>0.00</b>	200.00	<b>0.00</b>
Bursary Fund	900.00	<b>500.00</b>	400.00	<b>500.00</b>
Summer Event	7,664.02	<b>5,000.00</b>	0.00	<b>5,000.00</b>
Bay of Quinte UCW	693.04	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
M&O UCW	2,655.74	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
NUCW Leadership Grant	0.00	<b>375.00</b>	375.00	<b>375.00</b>
Miscellaneous	1,275.00	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
Interest	1.22	<b>5.00</b>	2.35	<b>5.00</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	21,088.47	<b>\$11,948.00</b>	\$5,455.35	<b>\$11,948.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Annual Meeting	914.00	<b>500.00</b>	0.00	<b>500.00</b>
Mid Week (Fall Rally)	0.00	<b>300.00</b>	0.00	<b>300.00</b>
Leadership Day	0.00	<b>375.00</b>	0.00	<b>375.00</b>
Executive Meetings	200.00	<b>1,000.00</b>	197.00	<b>1,000.00</b>
President's Honouriam	200.00	<b>400.00</b>	0.00	<b>400.00</b>
Office Administration	0.00	<b>200.00</b>	0.00	<b>200.00</b>
Archives	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	0.00	<b>100.00</b>
Mission & Service	425.00	<b>0.00</b>	200.00	<b>0.00</b>
WFC, Zambia	2,515.55	<b>500.00</b>	200.00	<b>500.00</b>
NUCW Resources	245.00	<b>1,268.00</b>	1,746.00	<b>1,268.00</b>
Bursary Fund	0.00	<b>900.00</b>	0.00	<b>900.00</b>
Summer Event	7,845.53	<b>5,000.00</b>	0.00	<b>5,000.00</b>
Miscellaneous	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	100.00	<b>100.00</b>
Bank Charges	7.50	<b>50.00</b>	7.50	<b>50.00</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$11,927.35	<b>\$10,693.00</b>	\$2,350.00	<b>\$10,693.00</b>
<b>Opening Balance</b>		<b>9,161.12</b>	9,161.12	<b>12,265.97</b>
<b>Dif. Income Over Exp.</b>	9,161.12	<b>1,255.50</b>	3,104.85	<b>1,255.00</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>	9,161.12	<b>\$10,416.12</b>	\$12,265.97	<b>11,010.97</b>

Bursary Fund Balance: \$1,300

# EASTERN ONTARIO OUTAOUAIS REGIONAL UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

*Inaugural Meeting*

*Saturday, September 28, 2019*

*Trinity U.C., Smiths Falls, Ontario*

Barb DeJeet lead the gathering music of: Come in Come in and Sit Down; Worship the Lord, Over My Head, One More Step Along the World I Go.

Elaine Williams of East Central Ontario Regional UCW was the pianist.

Co-president Linda Stronski welcomed everyone, noting this is her home church. Linda led in the reciting of the UCW Purpose and Indigenous Acknowledgement. Co-president Kim Baird lit the Christ Candle and acknowledged the area/presbyterials.

Ottawa UCW led worship with an opening reading. Scripture was from Luke 12: 13-17. Worship was closed with prayer. Seaway Valley UCW did the Offering with a prayer by Kim Baird

Sandra Stakenvicius presented the power point on behalf of our guest speakers Debbie and her husband Rev. Dave as they were called away to Bermuda. It was an informative presentation on the life in Zambia.

Linda thanked her. "I am proud we have chosen Women of Zambia, which will help the young ladies stay in school and get an education and improve their lifestyle." It's a five-year project of the NUCW.

**MOTION:** Moved by Denise Wood and seconded by Nancy Hazen that the offering from the inaugural meeting go to Women of Zambia. **CARRIED.**

It was noted that in its first year, the NUCW has raised \$18,000.

**MOTION:** Moved by Louise Shaw and seconded by Arlene McKibbon to accept the agenda. **CARRIED**

Communications chair Connie Tabbert asked that a spot be on the agenda for a group photo of those attending the inaugural meeting.

## **APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE**

Barb DeJeet read aloud the executive: Kim Baird and Linda Stronski are co-presidents; Vice-President - Vacant; Past-President Barb DeJeet; Secretary—Connie Tabbert; Treasurer—Kim Baird; 2 Members at large—Arlene McKibbon and Linda Hamon; Stewardship – Carolle Dallas-Arbuckle; Leadership - Charlotte Hoy; Resources—Nancy Hazen; Communications—Connie Tabbert; Archives – Vacant; Area/Presbyterial Reps: Upper Valley-Connie Tabbert, Seaway Valley-Sharon Hinton, Ottawa-Pat Ashton, Four Rivers- Charlotte Hoy.

Barb noted we have until May to fill the two empty positions. "It would be nice to have a full slate of officers. We are coming together as Christ's daughters to do His work." If anyone

is interested in filling the positions, talk to Barb.

**MOTION:** Moved by Lee Torvi and seconded by Denise Wood to approve the executive until the AGM in May. **CARRIED**

### **APPROVAL OF BUDGET**

Kim Baird reviewed the budget (attached).

**MOTION:** Moved by Barb McGonegal and seconded by Pat Ashton to accept the 2019 financial statement for 2019. **CARRIED**

**MOTION:** Moved by Charlotte Hoy and seconded by Louise Shaw to accept the Budget 2020.

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Moved by Barb McGonegal and seconded by Lee Torvi that the amount for NUCW Resource be amended to to \$1,268 from \$500, which reflects \$1 a member as per our 2018 stats for our region

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Moved by Denise Wood and seconded by Irene Tannick to change the NUCW Resource amount to \$1,000 from \$1,268. **DEFEATED**

**MOTION** to accept the Amended Budget. **CARRIED.**

Kim also spoke about various grants that are available to UCW members—Agatha Kaasa Bursary and the Dorothy Amos Fund—some of which can be used to attend the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UCW in Sydney, NS in 2022. Application forms are available on the United Church website.

### **HOUSE RULES (BYLAWS)**

Barb DeJeet reviewed the house rules and there was much discussion. Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors will be corrected. There was also a recommendation under the Treasurer & Finance Chair to include an item about having the books reviewed annually.

**MOTION:** Moved by Sharon Hinton and seconded by Betty Faith to accept the House Rules with the changes brought forward. **CARRIED.**

### **BURSARY FUND**

Linda Stronstki spoke about creating a bursary fund. She noted it would be for anyone studying to become an ordained or diaconal minister. People receive financial help from the fund which is established. The EOR UCW would be provided with the names of those who are attending ministry and if they qualify, the money is split between all of them.

Barb DeJeet said the discussion was taking place because it was hoped EOR would carry on the tradition of financially helping those seeking the ministry, but stressed it was only to be for those from EOR.

**NOTE:** No motion was entertained to approve an EOR UCW Bursary Fund. However, taking into consideration of the feel of the membership in attendance through discussion and comments it was supported.

Linda Stronski noted that Marilyn Rodger is here as fair trade representative as is Pat Gil-

more The Book Lady' – both are downstairs.

Charlotte Hoy said grace and two group pictures were taken.

Adjourned for lunch at 12:08 p.m.

Following the gathering of music at 12:55 p.m., a 'wedding ceremony' occurred in the place of a skit, marrying Ottawa-Montreal, Seaway Valley, Four Rivers and Upper Valley into Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional United Church Women.

It was rewritten by Kim from a skit done "a long time ago" when the WA joined the WMS and formed UCW.

SUMMER EVENT – Kim Baird spoke about the Summer Event. Montreal Ottawa Conference UCW has been hosting for 78 years. She invited everyone from Regions 11, 12 and 13 to the 2020 event, which is held in Cornwall the last weekend in July. There is a theme, speaker, workshops and a great opportunity to meet other UCW members.

CAMP QUIN MO LAC – Lee Torvi provided a report on the camp, which is attached.

NUCW MEETING – Linda and Kim both spoke about the recent NUCW fall meeting, agreeing it was a wonderful time. There were meetings from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UCW will be held in Sydney NS from July 11-15, 2022. A committee has been working on the special event. Sally Armstrong is the guest speaker. Registration will only be online. Various tours are planned. The cost is \$400 plus room. There will only be 22 people allowed per region.

NUCW SURVEY – Kim Baird spoke about the survey. There are 1,026 UCW units across Canada and 574 responded, which is 56 percent. The total membership of UCW in 2018 was 17,280 of those, 108 have answered the call to become Licence Lay Worship Leaders.

For EOR 45 units responded; 35 units donated \$223,541 to church, 37 units donated \$77,766 to community outreach; 423 UCW sit on other committees and boards within their church and 14 service their regions as LLWL.

"We do make a difference. Let's keep on making a difference," she said. Report is attached.

REGIONAL COUNCIL – Linda Stronski is a member as of June. She noted there is no seat at the table for UCW, which seems to be the policy across Canada. At the first meeting recently held, the board members introduced themselves and reviewed the governance report. The next meeting is in Prescott on Oct. 5.

ARCHIVES – Elaine Farley provided a detailed report on archives. (Connie is hopeful of obtaining this report and sending it to executive members, who can then send it to their UCWs.)

She also spoke about Old Hay Bay Church, located near Napanee. The church, which is a national historical site, is open May 24 weekend to Thanksgiving weekend each year. Elaine was recently elected chair, noting she is the first woman chair and the first to be a non-minister chair.



Linda Stronski said, "It's a unique place to go and visit," pointing out that the Bay of Quinte Contributed funds for the new windows.

Elaine provided a power point of photos, explaining the various work that is being done.

**INSTALLATION OF EXECUTIVE** – Barb DeJeet carried out the duty of installing the executive, which was then followed by a group photo.

**COURTESIES** were provided by Lee Torvi, noting, "This is an historic occasion."

**ADJOURNMENT** was moved by Linda Hamon at 3:28 p.m.

## ***Leadership Report for 2020***

Due to COVID-19 no in-person workshops could be held. Instead, I arranged an on-line Zoom workshop lead by Jane Dawson concerning the Psalms.

This workshop was attended by women from the entire region.

In the time allowed we learned about the emotions of lament, despair and questing for God. Also, we learned about turning points and the return to hope, encouragement and even joy. Some of the ladies even wrote some psalms in response to the information share.

This was a very interactive workshop with all the participants involved. The feedback was greatly appreciative for the session and a request was made for more in the future.

A great first workshop for the Region.

*Respectfully submitted*

*Charlotte Hoy*

*Leadership*

## ***Resource Report***

Due to the pandemic and closure or lack of access to our churches during the past year, it has been difficult to recommend resources when many of our UCW members didn't have access to resources, such as Broadview Magazine or Book Displays

*Respectfully submitted,*

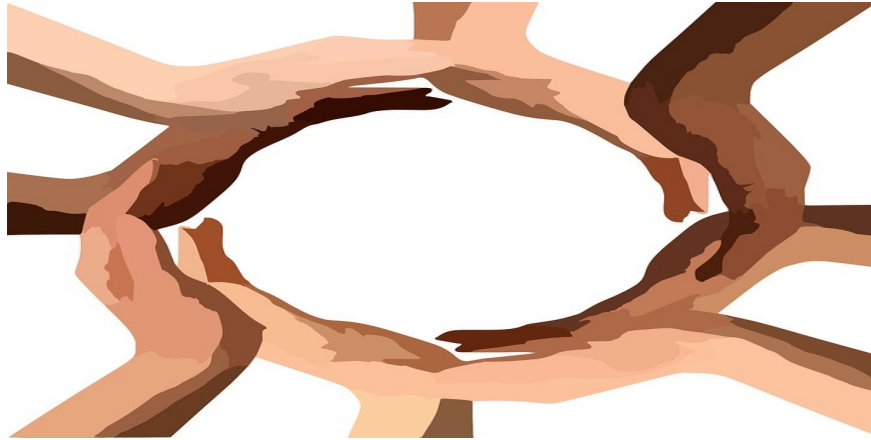
*Nancy Hazen,*

*Resource Person.*



**79<sup>th</sup> SUMMER EVENT 2021**

# LOVING OUR NEIGHBOURS



**July 24, 2021**

**Via Zoom**

THEME SPEAKER: **The Right Reverend Richard Bott**  
Moderator of the United Church of Canada

Also, a presentation by the Cornwall Interfaith Partnership

## **REGISTRATION INFO**

Please register for the Zoom Gathering by emailing  
Carolle Dallas-Arbuckle at [cdallas@ripnet.com](mailto:cdallas@ripnet.com)  
*Enter UCW on Subject Line*



For More Information contact Kim Baird @ 613-933-5851 or [bairdj4@gmail.com](mailto:bairdj4@gmail.com)



Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region UCW  
Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council

**A Day of Worship, Study, Music & Fellowship for Women, Men & Youth**  
SPONSORED BY THE EASTERN ONTARIO OUTAOUAIS UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

## *Ottawa Area UCW*

Due to the pandemic and also due to our former President Pat Ashton moving out west, the executive has put meetings on hold. Emails have gone back and forth when decisions have had to be made. Carolle Dallas-Arbuckle did plan a Zoom Fellowship Day on Thursday, November 19, 2020. Everyone enjoyed seeing and hearing from each other and Rev. Sandra Yule celebrated communion with us.

Hopefully, with our UCW members getting vaccines and our churches able to re-open, things will change in the not too distant future.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Hazen,*



### *Four Rivers UCW Report 2020*

As everyone continues to describe 2020, “It was an interesting year”.

Due to COVID-19 we had to cancel our AGM and so we continue with our original executive. Although everything remained on hold for most of the year we strove to live the UCW Purpose.

We held no Executive meetings in 2020. A quorum would not have been present by zoom. Our large rural area has its drawbacks. Even many local units have very poor internet connections and zoom was not a good option for many.

As the year progressed with restrictions on meetings and numbers the UCW members rose to the challenge. Most of our local UCW's cancelled in-person meetings and annual fundraising events.

Our UCW women stepped out of their comfort zones and tried new things to continue to move forward our mission. They held back-yard tea's, drive-through pie pick-ups, cookie/bake sale and flower sales. Technology was used to hold on-line auctions, pop up markets and talent fairs. Funds raised help the churches and the M&S.

Student bursaries were given to young people in one community who were pursuing post secondary education. Prayer Shawls and Prayer quilts were still made and distributed. Many acts of kindness and help have been reported.

We all share in the small bounties and think back to our UCW purpose. COVID-19 has brought many of us back to the roots of our beginnings. God delights in strong women. We help one another to stay connected in Jesus Christ as we express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship and service.

*Respectfully submitted  
Charlotte Hoy  
President*

## ***SEAWAY VALLEY AREA***

Who would have expected the Covid pandemic would be with us all through 2020 and into 2021? We have seen and watched the world come to a **stop** because of Covid; watched our brothers and sisters in Christ suffer and struggle as they fought the Covid virus, with many succumbing to it. We have experienced sacrifices missing our family and friends, our day-to-day norms, special occasions, holidays, stay at home orders, wearing masks, sanitizing and washing hands and more sanitizing and washing hands. These sacrifices are so we can keep well and live our lives to the fullest.

In Seaway Valley we have tried our best to keep in contact with our UCW members throughout our area, through emails and telephone calls. Through conversations with various women, it was evident that the UCW women missed the fellowship meeting as a local Unit or at our Area gatherings. While keeping connected by way of computers, sadly many of our women do not have computers or reliable internet. Cards for Christmas and Easter were sent out to women around our Area as a way of connecting with them.

It was great to see several of our UCW members attend the EOOR Regional UCW Leadership Day, via Zoom held in the fall, Praying the Psalms. This workshop was led by Jane Dawson, the Minister Supporting Communities of Faith, Clusters and Networks for the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council and arranged by Charlotte Hoy, our Leadership Day Coordinator for EOOR Regional UCW.

As well, several UCW members accepted the invitation to participate in the closing worship and communion service of the National United Church Women fall meeting, again by Zoom.

Our Area executive have met several times over the past year, in person and by Zoom. We are hoping to arrange a gathering for the Seaway Valley Area UCW in June by Zoom. It will be a time of fellowship and worship.

As UCW women we continue to show strength and resilience, no matter what we are challenged with. It has not been easy however we continue to support our churches, our members and the wider community through our time, talents and prayer. And we know as we walk this journey, we do not walk alone, God is with us every step of the way.

*Blessings to all,*

*Kim Baird*

*Secretary*

*Seaway Valley Area UCW*

## Upper Valley Presbyterial

There were no meetings held in 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We remained in contact through emails and phone calls with our own UCWs.

With the opportunity to get the vaccine, we are hopeful meetings can soon resume and our churches will re-open and remain so.

*Blessings,*

*Connie Tabbert*

*President*



## 60th Anniversary Celebration

The Planning Committee for the 60th Anniversary of the UCW is working hard.

The pandemic has made every aspect of booking and planning that much more frustrating and difficult.

Please visit [uceast.ca](http://uceast.ca) This is our Regional Council Website. Click on Region 15, click on Ministries, click on United Church Women and you will find the updated information on the 60th. Things will be added as they fall into place.

Westjet and Air Canada will resume flights into Sydney, Nova Scotia soon.

The registration will be going live around the end of September. As soon as it's finalized, the date will be sent out.

We are encouraging anyone who wants to attend to consider applying for the NUCW grants. The forms are also on the 60th news page. Apply ... the money is there for us to access. It will offset the price of the registration. Don't forget, there are set due dates for applications.

*Ruth Kennedy, Chair—60th Planning Committee*



### **Nominations Report for EOOR UCW**

All positions are filled on the executive of EOOR UCW. Arlene McKibbon has had to step down as a member at large from the Ottawa/Seaway Valley Area, so we should try to fill this position.

*The new*

*Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region United Church Women  
executive for 2021-2022 is as follows:*

President : Linda Stronski ..... rstronski@cogeco.ca

Vice-President: Nancy Hazen ..... nhazen46@gmail.com

Past President: Kim Baird ..... bairdjk4@gmail.com

Secretary: Connie Tabbert ..... secretaryoorucw@gmail.com

Treasurer: Kim Baird ..... bairdjk4@gmail.com

Leadership: Charlotte Hoy ..... charlotte\_hoy@hotmail.com

Resources: Barbara DeJeet ..... dejeetb@gmail.com

Mission & Service: Carroll Dallas-Arbuckle ..... cdallas@ripnet.com

Nominations: Kim Baird ..... bairdjk4@gmail.com

Member-at-Large: Linda Hamon ..... linda\_hamon@yahoo.ca

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Barbara DeJeet*



## United Church Women Supporting Girls' Education in Zambia

There are multiple threats to adolescent girls' education. They require a comprehensive approach.

The UCW is partnering with Women for Change, Zambia. Together we will

- reduce high school girls' dropout rates
- mobilize women and men, girls and boys to address inequalities
- raise awareness of education as a basic right and an essential strategy to lift women and families out of poverty in rural Zambia

Women for Change anchors its work addressing gender inequalities, social exclusion, and marginalization of women and girls in rural areas to create an environment that empowers women and girls to actively participate in community development.



Women  
for Change

190056

Photos: Women for Change, Zambia

### *Women for Change, Zambia*

UCW Project Description United Church Women have a long tradition of supporting the ministries of The United Church of Canada through Mission & Service. Through units, regional UCWs, and the NUCW, the United Church Women in all configurations have been, and continue to be active and generous supporters of local ministry in their communities as well as joining together to work for peace and justice, supporting ministries throughout Canada and around the world.

Mission & Service is about God's mission in the world and how The United Church of Canada participates in that mission. United Church Women have been outstanding in their generous contributions enabling global partnership, community ministry, social justice minis-

tries, theological education and vocation, faith formation, local ministries, and conference leadership.

*Together, United Church Women...*

- pray about the issues and concerns they see around them
- educate themselves and others on those issues and concerns
- support the ministry of Mission & Service
- contribute designated funds that enable community and global partners to implement important projects.

In September, 2018 the National United Church Women adopted a global project implemented by United Church global partner Women for Change in Zambia.

This project can be found in the 2019 Gifts with Vision Catalogue:  
[www.giftswithvision.ca/products/keep-girls-in-school](http://www.giftswithvision.ca/products/keep-girls-in-school).

This project continues to reflect the long-term UCW interest in and commitment to education, beginning with the founding organizations of WMS and WA.

Women for Change, Zambia

“Never accept poverty. Unite and fight it.”

Women for Change (WfC) is a non-governmental organization that works in rural communities in Zambia, focusing on social and economic changes that empower women and children. Established in 1992, WfC has grown into one of the most influential indigenous NGOs in Zambia. Women for Change has been a partner of The United Church of Canada since 1992.

### ***Project description***

Access to education for everyone, regardless of income, is an essential part of securing greater justice, broad-based participation in society, and the eradication of poverty. The United Church, working with Mission & Service global partners, understands education is a basic human right and a critical part of the global strategy to end poverty and ensure prosperity for all people over the next 15 years. While education is key to development many children face significant barriers to education, and in many countries girls face multiple challenges. Traditional attitudes toward women, poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, poverty, and a choice to use scarce resources to educate boys rather than girls can all stand in the way of women and girls fully participating in education. When girls are denied opportunities for education, it has lifelong implications for women and communities. It decreases family income, increases health risks, and places women and girls at a higher risk of trafficking and exploitation. Accessible education for girls and women is an effective way to improve the lives of individual families as well as communities living in poverty.

While the Zambian government has made education a key priority and much work has been done, more remains to be done to create a stable and sustainable education system for children, particularly girls. One challenge is to win widespread social acceptance of education not only as a right, but also an essential component to addressing issues of poverty. This is a particular challenge in rural areas.

Women for Change is working to address the numbers of girls dropping out of school in



rural districts in Zambia. Social norms lead to an understanding that the appropriate role for girls is to be a good wife and mother, and cultural norms dictate that education is not necessary for that role. In traditional communities, girls who have entered puberty go through several rites of passage that prepare them for the role of wife and mother. After going through these rites, many parents opt to arrange marriages for their daughters rather than pay for education. Most families living in poverty would opt to keep boys in school and arrange marriages for girls.

The program works with adolescent girls aged 10–18 who often drop out of high school because of early marriage, teen pregnancy, or lack of water and sanitation. The program offers incentives to girls to motivate them to re-enroll in school. Teachers are given training to help support the girls in their return to school. An additional focus will be working with parents and traditional leaders to build awareness of the importance of education in reducing poverty and improving day to day lives for women and children.

Women for Change will co-ordinate with political, NGO, and community structures with similar goals to create an atmosphere that encourages girl children in rural areas to enroll and stay in school. To encourage families to keep their girl children in school, WfC will also work with parents of vulnerable children to promote livelihood training and entrepreneurship so that economic issues and hardships for families living in poverty are addressed.

*What can the UCW do?*

1. Learn more about the barriers to education faced by women and girls in Zambia, Canada, and other places.
2. Support in prayer Women for Change and others working to remove barriers to education for girls.
3. Support local community initiatives such as homework clubs, school breakfast programs, and after-school programs that help children succeed in school.
4. Advocate for effective international support for access to education.
5. Contribute funds to help Women for Change keep girls in school.

*When contributing funds:*

- Please make cheques payable to The United Church of Canada.
- Send to NUCW, 3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4
- Note on the cheque or in an accompanying letter: NUCW—Women for Change, Zambia