

THE ST. MICHAEL'S LEAGUE

Issue 29

CWLstmichlon@gmail.com

October 2025

Message from Our President

Dorothy Solomon



The St. Michael's Newsletter is always like a smorgasbord, something for everyone. We are a vibrant council and not everything gets featured, so I extend a heartfelt thank you to every member for your commitment to CWL values.

Having been born and raised in the Catholic faith, I sometimes take for granted all that I believe without questioning. Prayers I learned are taking on more meaning now that I wonder where they came from and what they mean. The Patroness of The Catholic Women's League of Canada is Our Lady of Good Counsel. This is a Catholic title for the Virgin Mary which recognizes her as the source of heavenly wisdom and guidance for humanity. This devotion encourages us to seek Mary's intercession for discernment and help in making good decisions. We especially need discernment in these challenging times as we view her as a spiritual guide and intercessor for her Son, Jesus Christ.

The title was added to the Litany of Loreto by Pope Leo XIII in 1903. Mary's heavenly wisdom comes from her connection to the Holy Spirit and how she used it to guide Jesus as he was growing up. We recognize her role as a mother who cares for her spiritual children, interceding on our behalf to help us discern God's will so that we may attain true good. Devotion to Our Lady of Good Counsel is a way of asking her for her help in making wise decisions, finding strength in times of weakness, and following the path of truth and faithfulness.

Every CWL member has a role, and you are important wherever you contribute. There are four main types of membership. The fully active members attend meetings, share in the business portions and exercise voting privileges. Some

serve on committees and elected positions. There is a group for whom it is not feasible to participate this much. We rely on you to help on a task-by-task basis. The members who pay dues but cannot be actively involved choose to support the efforts of the League and stay informed of events and opportunities and perhaps attend on occasion. Spiritual prayer partners are vital to all of us as they keep us all connected to God when we sometimes slip in our daily practice of prayer. Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us.

We hosted a flower arranging workshop and made arrangements to take to some to our home bound members. We hosted the World Day of Prayer, and the featured country was Palestine, a timely choice, as that was when we heard about the war in Palestine and Israel. There was a bounty of conventions, Diocesan, Provincial and National. The crafting days to prepare for the Christmas Market were such a joy. These are just a few of our involvements. I look forward to seeing you at one of our gatherings.

October, the month of Thanksgiving, calls to mind how richly blessed we are. An activity that I do every day is to write down something I am thankful for - a dandelion in October, sunshine, my family, Eucharist and comfortable shoes. Then on Sunday before Mass I read these and come to church with a grateful heart. Blessed Thanksgiving to you, your family and friends.

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.

October: Uniting their sufferings with Christ, let us pray for those who are terminally ill and who find their own sufferings unbearable.

November: For our beloved family and friends who have died, and those who mourn them. We thank you for continuing to keep these prayers in your hearts.

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From Our Spiritual Advisor Cathryn Hall



I write to you this October as your newly appointed Spiritual Advisor. October brings us many blessings as we watch the leaves turn colour

(and fall on our lawns), marking a change in season as we stand in awe and wonder at the beauty of God's creation. Thanksgiving gives us an opportunity to gather with family and friends in gratitude for all that God has given to us, while never forgetting those who go without in our city and beyond.

Over the years I have come to know the work of the Catholic Women's League, inspiring and empowering women in our parishes to live out their baptismal call. The three core values: Faith, Service, and Social Justice lay the foundation for the good works the League does year in and year out in our parish, city, province, and country. For this we are most grateful.

For those of you who I have not had an opportunity to meet, a little on who I am! I came into the Catholic faith as an adult in 1996 at St. Peter's Cathedral. Always active in my faith life growing up in the United Church in my hometown of Port Perry, when I was received into the Catholic Church I immediately got involved in parish life with my first love - Music Ministry. Over time I served as Lector, Social Justice, Confirmation Preparation, RCIA Sponsor, CWL, and Youth Group. As I got more involved, the desire to go deeper into the faith led me to complete a Certificate in Pastoral Ministry. With some formal education in ministry, I began part-time work which led to full-time ministry at King's University College. During my seven years at King's, I enrolled in the Master of Divinity Program at St. Peter's Seminary, graduating in

2008. Also, during this time, I got involved in the Certificate of Pastoral Ministry Program first as a facilitator, then as Coordinator of the Program, which continues to this day.

In 2008 I began full-time ministry as Pastoral Minister at St. Peter's Cathedral. Fast forward to 2023, when we became a Family of Parishes, and my ministry as Pastoral Minister with the Family began. Currently my two key responsibilities are R.C.I.A.- adults and children, and Marriage (St. Peter's). I also serve as a member of our Pastoral Team, liaise with various ministries and committees, and work closely in a mentorship role with our two other lay pastoral staff members.

I am delighted to serve as the Spiritual Advisor to both the St. Michael's and St. Peter's Catholic Women's League in our Family of Parishes. Over the past three years I have witnessed the spirit and dedication of the CWL members living out Faith, Service, and Social Justice in concrete and meaningful ways. I look forward to getting to know the women of the St. Michael's Council as you continue to embrace your faith and grow in your call to service to our community.

November Membership Meeting

Monday, November 3rd, 7:00 pm
St. John Paul II Room

General Meeting and Social
Women 16 years of age and up are
welcome!

Here I am Lord,
Send Me

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Featured Member Gerarda Smith-Hillier

Cathie Gauthier



What do you get when you combine sea breezes, salt water, star-strewn night skies and a strong, Catholic Newfoundland family? You get Gerarda Smith-Hillier! To know Gerarda is to know a talented, humorous (even a little “salty” at times) faith-filled dynamo.

At age five, Gerarda’s family moved to Ontario. They eventually settled in London which is still home for her parents and two siblings.

Gerarda attended Catholic Central. At age 17, while working part time at Woolco at the Accommodation Desk, she encountered a dashing fellow working in Sporting Goods. Lorne was 19. They began dating...and never stopped! As Gerarda says, “We grew up together.” Lorne became a Catholic out of respect for Gerarda’s faith and she is blessed to see the strong Catholic man he is today.

Gerarda became a teacher, attending Western and Althouse. Her first teaching job was in North York which is also where the first of their three children, Matthew, was born. They returned to London where Brendan and Olivia were born. It was important to Gerarda that she live close to her parents so her children would have an experience of extended family. Though Ontario offered many advantages to her family, Gerarda and her siblings did not have the gift of being close to grandparents who remained in Newfoundland.

She had an exemplary career in education. Gerarda taught in the classroom for twenty years and loved the Catholic school system that allowed her to be open in sharing her faith and was always conscious of her role as an evangelizer. Her three children all attended St. Mary’s where she herself taught for ten years. St. Mary’s was her favourite school as she enjoyed the atmosphere full of music, drama and art. Following her in-class teaching, she worked for the Board as a Curriculum Support Teacher for another four years. Then it was back into the school as a principal for seven years before retiring.

During her teaching career, Gerarda continued her education. This included a Master’s in Curriculum, as well as five additional theology courses with a focus on bioethics, social justice and women’s role in the Church. A strong Pro-life supporter, she volunteered, educated and led discussion at the elementary and college level. She has published faith-building short stories for children’s magazines and even hosted a multi-faith t.v. show where she interviewed Catholics on various themes. And with all that, balanced a thriving household when Lorne returned to school to become a teacher!

Post-retirement led to more learning. Gerarda attained a Certificate in Pastoral Ministry from St. Peter’s Seminary which led to leadership in our parish. She has been Parish Council chair and has led Bible Study for the past seven years. She is a facilitator in our parish YANA group, a strong presence in our CWL and an avid member of our nearly famous SMUGlees ukulele group.

It turns out you can take the child out of Newfoundland, but you can’t take the Newfoundland out of the child. In retirement Gerarda and Lorne built a cozy home on the south-west coast of “the rock”, near Stephenville where her relatives still live. We’re always happy to have her back in London after their three-month hiatus in a place that nurtures her soul.

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St. Michael's CWL Membership Drive

It's the time of the year for our annual CWL membership drive, which will be held after the Masses on **November 29th & 30th** this year, together with our annual **Apple Pie Sale**.

We delightfully welcome our current members and as always new members to join, **so spread the word!**

All current members are encouraged to renew their memberships at that time. **Membership fee is \$40.00 per year.**

Renewal is easy - Follow any method below:

1. Pay in person at the membership desk Nov. 29th & 30th
2. Drop your envelope in the collection basket during November (avail. at the desk & in foyer)
3. Pay by e-transfer during November or December to CWLstmichlon@gmail.com

All women of the Parish 16 years and older are welcome to join. Bring a friend to the Membership Drive so that they may see what we are about and have their questions answered.

Volunteers will be needed in the hall after the Masses to assist with the Pie Sale and to promote membership in our league. Members are also encouraged to wear a sash and participate in the Ministries that weekend at Mass.

Please contact Hiruni (hirunik.therapy@gmail.com), or Joan (519-438-4909) or joanlobsinger@sympatico.ca if you are able to help.



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“Because everyone should be included and valued”

Mary Herlick



We had the pleasure of hearing Marian Strom, the Foundation Chair of the Board of Directors of PHSS Medical and Complex Care in Community, speak to the members of our CWL

meeting on October 6th. Marian is also the President of the St. Peter's CWL, London North Central Catholic Family of Parishes.

PHSS provides supports to people who have complex medical, physical and/or developmental needs. These may have occurred at birth or as a result of acquired injuries later on.

There are several houses in London and a few in other communities in Ontario that have been purchased and renovated to be fully accessible. The people who live in these homes make choices about activities they want to enjoy each day and through PHSS these are realized. Families do not apply directly to PHSS and there is a significant wait list for supports and services. It is my understanding that a family could speak to their Case Coordinator in how to apply for PHSS.

Marian mentioned that PHSS provides an accessible van, at an approximate cost of \$75,000 per van to each home that requires one, to allow the people they support to attend doctors' appointments and activities in the community. Some funds are made available for dream vacations. Marian gave an example of one woman who chose a trip to the East Coast and PHSS assisted in the costs associated with that trip. There is also an apartment complex on Clarke Road for seniors and students where some people who receive support through PHSS live as well. This allows for greater opportunities for supported people to make friendships and engage in meaningful activities with the other residents in this complex.

Of vital importance to families is the 24/7 staff support of a Personal Support Worker (PSW) provided by PHSS to stay with their child/adult while they are admitted to hospital. This worker would be familiar with the ill person's needs and communication abilities and be able to provide comfort as well as assist in communicating with the hospital staff.

Marian outlined that there are three major fundraisers each year for PHSS Foundation. In April of this year at the London Hunt and Country Club, Clark Bryan, the founder of the Aeolian Hall, was honoured for his commitment to music, art, and culture in our community. In June, a Bowl-A-Thon was held at Fleetway and in August a golf tournament was held at River Valley Golf Club in St. Mary's.

I personally know many families whose adult children benefit from PHSS. As Marian stated, these supports allow people to enjoy enriching lives in their own neighbourhoods and communities. I thank Marian for her dedication to her community, including her 14 year involvement with PHSS, and for informing us about the valuable role that PHSS provides to communities in Ontario.

Catholic Women's League Online

CWL Diocese of London:

<http://www.cwllondon.com/>

CWL Ontario

Website: <https://cwl.on.ca/>

CWL National Website:

<https://www.cwl.ca/> and <https://catholicwomenunite.ca/>

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ANNUAL PIE MAKING

All women of the parish are invited to participate in a day of community pie making on Tuesday November 18th in preparation for the upcoming CWL Apple Pie Sale. We are beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the parish kitchen and will finish around 2:30. If interested, please feel free to drop by, or call Joan Lobsinger at 519-438-4909.



BAKE SALE FOR THE CHRISTMAS MARKET

We are looking for donations of baked goods and/or candy for the Christmas Market. If possible, please have them packaged. They can be dropped off at the church on November 7th. Please note there will not be a bake sale with our membership drive this year.

CWL Memberships



For \$40 per year you get many opportunities to:

- Develop your faith
- Build new friendships
- Have a voice on current issues at the national level
- Participate in charitable acts
- Contribute to social justice initiatives
- Serve others in our community, particularly those in need
- Learn about what is happening in our community, our diocese, and Canada
- Spend time with like-minded women in our parish
- Have fun while supporting others
- Celebrate women, friendship and our successes

Membership dues are collected in the fall for the coming year.

Pay by e-transfer to CWLstmichlon@gmail.com or drop your envelope in the collection basket at Mass.

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Reflections on Our Regional Meet & Greet

Dorothy Solomon

The purpose of the Regional Council is to act as a liaison between parish councils and the Diocesan Council. The Catholic Women's League is multilayered, and because the London Diocese covers such a large area, we needed an intermediate council to help keep communication flowing smoothly. The Diocesan Council receives directives from the Provincial Council, which in turn receives them from National. From there, the chain continues: diocesan meets with regional, and regional meets with the presidents of the councils in her area. I am blessed to serve the largest region in London, which includes 19 councils.

Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I am so thankful for your guidance and presence last evening at our Regional Meet & Greet with the Diocesan Council.

The energy throughout the evening was vibrant, and the process ran smoothly. Our goal was simple yet meaningful: to pray, to learn, to share ideas, to laugh, to enjoy fellowship and refreshments, to build camaraderie, and to make new friends. The happy chatter that filled the room was a sure sign that each of these hopes was fulfilled. Together, we celebrated accomplishments and acknowledged challenges - both essential parts of our shared journey of faith and service.

While time didn't allow us to share every story and update with the whole group, I have summarized them and would be happy to provide them to anyone interested. Please reach out to our Life Members for guidance and support - they are an invaluable resource.

A personal highlight of the evening was when the Diocesan Executives formed a panel to introduce themselves and share how they first became involved in the Catholic Women's League. Each story began with a personal invitation - a gentle tap on the shoulder from the Holy Spirit, so to speak. Each woman spoke of another member who reached out and said, "Have you considered joining the CWL? Come to a meeting,

lend a hand at a special event, or help with a one-time project." These were heartfelt witness statements - simple moments of encouragement that have grown into lifelong commitments of faith and service.

When it came time for my own introduction, I described myself as "Wonder Woman" - because I make so many wonderful plans and then find myself wondering who is going to help me complete them! Yet the evening reminded me just how generous and willing our members are. Before the event had even started, many of you approached me asking, "What needs to be done?"

There are simply too many thank-yous to list, but please know how deeply I appreciate each of you for answering that invitation - the gentle tap on your shoulder from the Holy Spirit.

May the same enthusiasm and love for working in the vineyard of the Lord continue to thrive within your own councils. Each of us has a role to play, a gift to share, and a calling to serve.

I read Pope Leo's message for today, and once again, I was reminded of how beautifully the Holy Spirit slips those messages into our lives:

Do not wait, but respond enthusiastically to the Lord who calls us to work in His vineyard. Do not delay, roll up your sleeves, for the Lord is generous, and you will not be disappointed! Working in His vineyard, you will find an answer to that profound question you carry within you: What is the meaning of my life?



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CWL Christmas Market Saturday, November 8th

Our Christmas Market is only days away! Thank you to the many members and parishioners who have already volunteered to help out and/or donated items for the sale.

We are still welcoming donations of craft items, children's toys and games, Christmas items, jewellery, candy, baked goods and preserves, and silent auction items. **If you are able to donate any of these items or even make a cash donation, please drop it off at the church office, use the donation boxes in the narthex, or contact Darlene Charrette (519-852-5252; dcharrette8101@rogers.com) or Veronica Solis (versolis@hotmail.com; 519-476-3407) for pickup.**

Spread the word to your friends, family and work colleagues! We are hoping for lots of people to come to our Christmas Market. The proceeds will help Hospitality North, the SVDP Housing Project and other CWL initiatives.

CWL Display Case

By Joan Roffey and Joan Lobsinger

It started as a dream several years ago. The St. Michael's CWL wanted a display case to match the one owned by the Knights of Columbus which hangs in the parish hall. In it, we could house and display plaques and memorabilia to shine a light on who we are and what we do.

We began by taking measurements and then searching for a carpenter who could create what

we only imagined. It was CWL member Janet Peckham who suggested Keith Seyler for the project, and we couldn't be happier with the result! After consulting with Father Daniel on August 7th about where it would be hung, the wheels were put in motion. Final measurements were taken by Keith, plans were drawn up, and the completed cabinet was hung in the parish hall on September 24th. Assisting Keith with the install were Janet Peckham and her daughter, Paula.



The CWL display case can be found on the left-hand wall as you enter the parish hall, just past the coat racks. Next time you find yourself there, you are invited to take a moment to have a look. I think you will be impressed with what you see!



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Come One Come All

CWL Christmas Market
St. Michael's Parish Hall
511 Cheapside (at Maitland), London
Saturday November 8, 2025
9:00am to 3:00pm

Look for UNIQUE GIFTS made by Parish Crafters, including:

- ♥ Hand-crafted Wooden Items & Yarn Crafts
- ♥ Hand-made Cards, Bookmarks & Decorations
- ♥ Hand-sewn Items & Clothing
- ♥ Homemade Preserves, Baked Goods & Candy
- ♥ Ready-to-give Gifts
- ♥ New & Re-purposed Items perfect for Christmas giving

We will also be hosting a **Draw Table and Silent Auction** which will offer wonderful Gifts and Prizes for all ages!

★ Enjoy beverages and light LUNCH at our Christmas Cafe ★

Find something for everyone on your list!

❄️ *Cash Only For All Purchases* ❄️

Proceeds to support
St. Vincent de Paul Affordable Housing,
Hospitality North and other CWL charities & initiatives.

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40 Days For Life London Campaign 2025

Verónica Solís

From September 24th to November 1st, 2025, our community will unite with many others from coast to coast – and internationally – for a major simultaneous pro-life mobilization – the 40 Days for Life campaign. Faithful believers are praying that these efforts will mark the beginning of the end of abortion.



CWL women in action as witnesses of the preciousness and sacredness of life at the corner of Wellington and Commissioners. Sharing friendship, prayers and incredible stories. From left to right: Grace, Carole, Verónica, Marilyn, Agnes.



Veronica and Dolly, CWL members praying together along with 200 other people, for the beauty and sacredness of life from conception to natural death. Fr. Patrick Beneteau was there and gave a special blessing to all who were present!



CWL busy and active at the Western Fair. It was a joy to see families amazed by the beauty and perfection of life. Young and old stop to watch videos and play with the real-life models of the babies in the womb! All CWL members should have this experience of service in our community!

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ST. MICHAEL'S CWL AND KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS ARE HOSTING A

PARISH FUN NIGHT

November 22, 2025

St. Michael's Parish Hall

\$10/person or \$30/family

7:00pm Doors Open

7:30-10:30pm Trivia Competition with Prizes

**INCLUDES YOUTH &
CATHOLIC TRIVIA CATEGORIES**

- Alcohol free/family friendly
 - Teams welcome
 - Snacks, pop and juice
- Halfway break with pizza!

TICKETS

Available from the
Parish Office or
Joan Lobsinger
519-438-4909
Marty McAllister
519-870-1859



Jointly sponsored by the St. Michael's
Parish Catholic Women's League and
Council 12820 Knights of Columbus.
Proceeds to be used for K of C
and CWL community projects.

