

## **Goal 4 – Affirmation Working Group**

By Sharon Ciebin, Goal 4 Lead

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

What a pleasure it is to share a second update on the affirmation working group’s progress! Seven women from across Canada continue to trust the Lord and have the utmost faith and hope that He will guide their efforts as new processes for a welcoming, inclusive and affirming environment are created. These members have continued to research groups and resources. While all materials have provided beneficial information to the overall plan, the overwhelming responses received from parish council presidents on best practices and member engagement has been both a lesson in the faith of members and a humbling experience for us all.

Two talented members of the affirmation working group share their journey below.



### **Marg McCallum**

Life Member

St. Gertrude’s Parish Council, Woodstock, New Brunswick

I joined the working group as a latecomer in September. In the beginning, I found myself stumbling along, trying to catch up and grasp the meaning of the strategy and action plan established by the other members of the working group.

After lengthy discussions and much reading and research, I now understand the goal. The initial priority was to review internal and external resources, which has been accomplished. The journey to completing this task has been quite amazing—the Lord definitely guided the plan!

A lengthy review of all League materials available on the national website left me somewhat overwhelmed. Resource materials are diverse and numerous. Information relevant to this working group is being studied and will be updated as required. National executive members are reviewing and updating documents and resources applicable to their roles as well.

The excitement began when the working group decided to reach out to every parish council president and ask them to identify “best practices” and “engaged membership.” A bit nervous, the working group created a plan on how to contact presidents, with hopes some would respond.

**RESPOND!!!** League sisters responded in large numbers and with an abundance of information. More importantly, the responses reflected a love for the League. Presidents took the time to tell their stories of challenges and successes. These responses have given the working group new hope as we move toward the completion of this strategy. It is now up to us to delve deeper into the information provided and to use our largest resource—members—to create a plan that will help every council.

While visiting my grandchildren recently, the Christmas excitement was in the air. The children were reading a retailer's catalogue and pointed out what they wanted Santa to bring. I was reminded of the same excitement from my childhood and thought about how times have changed—but have they, with today's demand for online shopping. Implementing the League's strategic plan will transform it so that it will work well in the world today while keeping its foundation.

Stay tuned to find out how the Lord will guide the next steps.



**Shirley Rollheiser**

Parish Past President

St. Mary Parish Council, Chilliwack, British Columbia

Change, growth and bringing new life into an organization can cause fear. The fearful part for me, is my human weakness. The “CWL Prayer for Renewal” speaks about God's graces and inspires and helps me to fearlessly grow with all members of the affirmation working group.

It is exciting to think back to the 2017 town hall “Building on Foundation, the League of the Future” presentation held at the annual national convention in Charlottetown. One resource I found useful and was able to share and discuss with my council were the questions, “What are we proud of?”, “What should we stop?” and “What will the CWL look like in 10 years?”

It is hard for me to realize that I am working with some wonderful League sisters to strategize and create processes that will ensure all members feel valued and affirmed as we journey into the next 100 years of the League. Many councils do value and affirm members as attested to by a large number of responses from parish council presidents to the four questions forwarded to them. Please be assured your responses will help in our deliberations as we enrich the processes of valuing and affirming all members. Thank you for participating.

Involvement in this working group has enabled me to read many good books and blogs, listen to podcasts and presentations from various groups, both Christian and secular, while researching how they welcome, value and affirm members. By God's graces and blessings, I will continue to learn and grow with my League sisters.

The affirmation working group will have more opportunities for member involvement, and we trust we can rely on your continued generous support.