

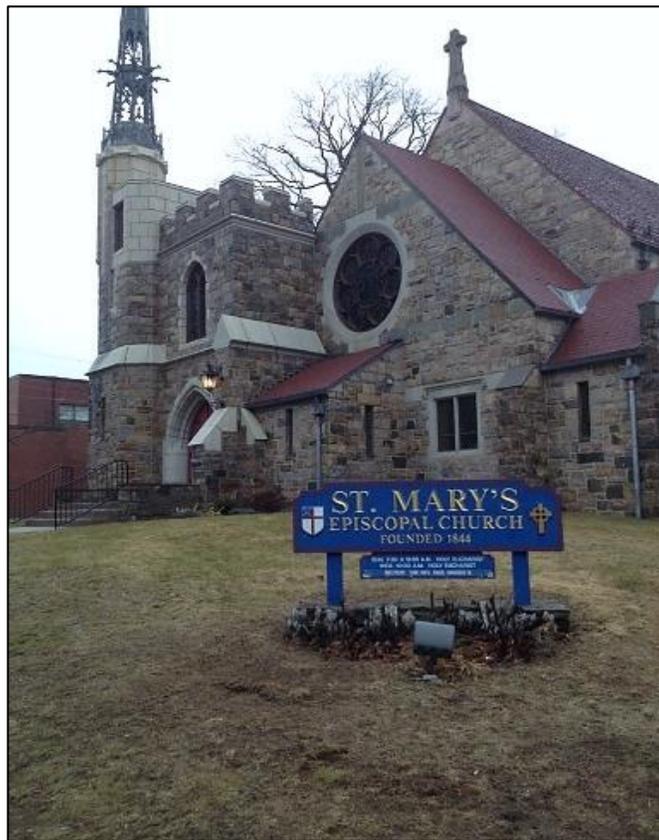
Connecticut Communiqué

Episcopal Church Women In Connecticut



Fall 2018

United Thank Offering



**St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Manchester, CT
Thursday, November 1, 2018**

Resource Page

Starting a New ECW

To receive a starter packet or talk to your parish, please contact President Betty Silva at (860) 623-3434 betty.silva@att.net

White Envelope

If you would like to arrange for a talk to your parish contact Nancy Wilson at (203) 380-1665; nanbw06614@yahoo.com

United Thank Offering

Please contact Betty Silva at (860) 623-3434 betty.silva@att.net

Christian Social Concerns/Special Assistance

Please contact Gloria Rogers at 203-281-1551; grogers878@yahoo.com

Church Women United

If you are interested in knowing more about Church Women United and schedule for the present year.

Please contact JoAnn Cromwell at (860) 667-0030; joann4avo@cox.net

**Our next issue is in the spring and the deadline for copy is:
March 4, 2019**

Send your articles and pictures (names of people and photo credits) marking the email subject line Spring 23019 ECW Communique to: Shirley Greiman, Editor

slggeo@yahoo.com or shirleygreiman@mac.com

Fall Ingathering For the United Thank Offering

November 1, 2018

*Location: St Mary's, 41 Park Street
Manchester, CT.*

Registration: 10:30 a.m.

Holy Communion: 11:00 a.m.

*Bishop Laura Ahrens will Preside & Preach
Luncheon at 12:30*

*Program Speaker: Reverend Deacon Ellen Adams
from St. James Episcopal Church,
New London*

*Grant recipient: of \$7,000 for a program that
Addresses Racial
Discrimination*



UNITED THANK OFFERING

Thankfulness Leads to Generosity.

A Gratitude Prayer

Dearest Lord, For the gift of life,

I thank thee.

For the rising sun and the seasonal promise of plants

And flowers that will surround me,

I thank thee.

For my family and friends and the gifts they share, I thank thee.

For my home and all its comforts within, I thank thee.

For the abundance, you give me and my willingness to share it with

others,

I thank thee.

For the wisdom of my elders and the ability to listen, I thank thee.

For acceptance of the challenges that I face everyday, I thank thee.

For the strength and courage to act for Justice and peace, I thank thee.

For the knowledge that without you I have nothing, I thank thee.

And for the end-of-day blessings before I sleep, I thank you gracious

Lord.

By: Mrs. Kathryn A. Leno, St. Andrew, Florence, OR.

“President’s Message”

On the 2018 Triennial Meeting in Austin, Texas



We began our journey on July 4, when we boarded the plane to Austin, Texas. There were five ladies: - the Reverend Ellen Kennedy, Claudia Dixon and Roberta Stocksdale, who were new delegates, Jean Kelsey, who was to attend the National Altar Guild Meeting, and me. Landing in Austin, we found our way to the Hilton Hotel and had time to get to our rooms and then register for the Triennial Meeting that was to begin on July 5th at the very large Convention Center just across the street from the hotel. That was wonderful; until we realized that from the hotel to our meeting room there were well over 1,000 steps. We knew we would be able to get in our 10,000 steps a day!

The Opening Service is always special, but this year was different, mainly because Bishop Curry was in no hurry and took the time to really greet each woman and have his picture taken with her. I have attended many Triennial Meetings and that is the first time I can remember it happening. There is something very special about receiving a cross from the Presiding Bishop.

There were workshops on Thursday afternoon, given by two Affiliates: the Girl's Friendly Society and the Church Periodical Club.

The ECW Welcome Dinner was held that evening. There were speakers from the Unified Gift Program, and Mobile Loaves and Fishes. This is a 27-acre village for the disabled, chronically homeless in Central Texas. It is a place of wonder with affordable housing of various styles, including many tiny homes, a large community garden, plus a store and a worship space, and a medical facility. We also heard about the 2018 Community Connection Gift, for the Shower Ministry. This ministry, housed at St. David's Episcopal Church in downtown Austin, began when women from St. Mark's Episcopal Church heard the women they were assisting talk about personal belongings being stolen when they were taking showers at other facilities in town. This is how the idea for a private and secure shower program for homeless women was born. The ECCT ECW donated both funds and items for their summer survival kits. We also took part in putting together the kits from items brought by the women.

Roberta has a wonderful report on the workshops, and that is one she attended.

Most days began with Yoga Body Worship and was usually followed by a "bring your own breakfast" to hear a speaker.

Friday's highlight was the announcement of the 2018 United Thank Offering Grants. I am pleased to announce that Connecticut received a grant for \$7,000.00. It was awarded to St. James Church, New London. They will use it to hold Community Conversations with area churches to address racial discrimination. It will also include a five-day camp for young people to discuss identity cultures and racial justice issues.

There is usually a Celebration of the Eucharist and the United Thank Offering Service on the Sunday during the Convention and Triennial Meeting. This year it was changed to a Friday Night Holy Eucharist Festival and UTO Ingathering. This is the Service when UTO Diocesan

leaders present a voucher with the total given from their dioceses to the Presiding Bishop. This is, for me, always a very moving experience. Claudia Dixon was our ECCT UTO representative, and she was the first person to present a voucher to Bishop Curry, as Connecticut was the first state alphabetically in Province I, which was the first province to be represented. Claudia will have a report on her experience at Triennial.

The Plenary Session on Saturday dealt with Bylaws and Resolutions. The most discussion was about the number of votes given to the Affiliate Groups. It is the custom that they receive two votes per group, the thinking by the National Board being that the UTO is also an affiliate to the national ECW. The argument from the UTO was that they are not an affiliate but a separate body, and therefore each of the members should have a vote in matters that come before the Triennial. After much discussion, it was voted to send the resolution to a committee to be worked on over the next three years.

There was a wonderful Episcopal Revival Worship on Saturday evening with the Presiding Bishop preaching. I had never been to such a revival. This was followed by a Texas Night Barbecue.

Sunday was the day that the Bishops held "Bishops United against Violence," a Public Witness march at the Brush Square Park across the street from the hotel. They also, with many others, traveled to the border in Texas where the children were being held. Ellen Kennedy was the delegate from ECW who was in the group which attended. Her report attests to the deeply emotional time it was for all who were there.

Sunday was also the day that the National ECW held a luncheon to honor Distinguished Women, chosen by their Dioceses. Our own Shirley Greiman was the distinguished woman from Connecticut.

The remainder of the day was devoted to workshops and shopping at the Exhibit Hall. Sunday night we attended a get together with the ECCT for a fun time and good food.

Monday the Plenary Session was devoted to hearing the candidates for the different National Board positions that were open. Tuesday we held elections and the new board was installed by the priest who had been our chaplain for the meeting.

Wednesday was the Closing Ceremony with Eucharist.

I have tried not to go into too much detail because there were four delegates, and the other three ladies also have reports on different parts of the Triennial and their experiences as first time delegates. Jean Kelsey will also have a report on her experiences at the Altar Guild meeting.

This is the first time that the ECCT Program Leaders have not been the delegates. As it worked out, the incoming ECCT ECW Officers were the delegates. I think this worked out very well. It was a wonderful way to get to know each other.

I feel we are off to an excellent start as we begin the next three years.

Betty Silva, ECCT ECW President



UTO Report

49th Triennial Meeting of the ECW

Luke 12:48 reminds us that, "To whom much is given, much is required." I am grateful to the ECW board for selecting me as one of the delegates to the Triennial Convention. My assignment is to report on the Triennial Meeting Opening Celebration and the UTO Ingathering.

The theme of the convention was, "**GO!** Share the Word: **Every Day, Comunicamos, Every Where.**" As a first timer to the convention, I was overwhelmed with all the daily activities, but was overjoyed to be there with other Saints from the Episcopal Church worldwide.

On July 5th the day started out bright and early with an orientation for the delegates where we were given directives such as the standing rules, instructions on the red and green cards for voting and the workshop schedules were available for viewing. The opening celebration was next and started with a worship service led by the Chaplain, the Rev Cathy Boyd and the organist was Dr. Linda Patterson. This was followed by the introduction of the national board members who processed dress in clothing representing women of the Church from past decades. Once some additional announcements were made, we finally arrived at the moment we were all waiting for. The arrival of the PB, the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry, who handed out the ECW traditional Cross to everyone and a professional photographer, took picture of each presentation. This was an amazing event and I felt honored to be in the presence of the PB. Once the PB departed the room, we were blessed to hear from two dynamic keynote speakers.

First, we heard from Bishop Steven Charleston, retired Bishop of Alaska. He spoke from the heart and told the story of how he started posting daily messages on social media and how others were helped by these messages, and as a result, he was encouraged by his wife to put these messages and responses into a book. He spoke about the Sacred Spirit of the people and how we are the spirit of God, Dignity and Hope. He made it clear that we are not wounded and our faith will not deny us. His message was of hope and reconciliation and he ended by saying, "we should stand strong in Faith and God will stand with us to the end."

The second keynote speaker was the Reverend Canon Stephanie Spellers. She was selected by the PB to be the Canon for Evangelism, Reconciliation and Creation. She brought us a message from John 15:9-11, 16. She told us that we are the hands that make things happen. We are to be loving, liberating and life giving. She reminded us that it's all about love, and we should fall in love with Jesus and should try and develop a spiritual intimacy with God. Rev. Spellers commanded us to be good stewards with what God has given us.

On Friday, July 6th at 4:45pm, we had the opportunity to witness and be part of the Holy Eucharist Festival and UTO Ingathering. There were over 100 representatives from all the Dioceses in the provinces and included the Air Force and Special Services. One of the highlights of this service was the procession with the representatives from each Diocese followed by the Clergy. We processed to the song, "Bless My Soul the King of Heaven." This was a sight to see and experience. One could almost feel the Holy Spirit moving among us. The choir was dynamic and had us lifting our voices and singing. The guitarist also did a rendition of, "I was glad when they said unto me let us go to the House of the Lord." The lessons were read in French and then in Spanish, The Psalm was done in alternate verses with a layperson reading in English and the guitarist singing. The Gospel was read in Hawaiian. The Reverend Gail Clark Jennings delivered the message and gave us 1 undisputable fact that, "Jesus prays for us and that transformation does not come without struggles" and ended by stating that, "we must be made one in establishing Christian Unity in this world of divide."

The next memorable moment was the presentation of the In-gathering amount for the Triennial. Prior to the presentation, the PB told us a short story to reinforce the importance of these funds. He was in Burundi, where there had been civil war for many years. While visiting for an enthronement, it was pointed out to him that the building with the sign on top that said Peace House was built with funds from the UTO! That, he said, offered hope. Connecticut was the first presenter, of which I was the representative. The amount presented was \$45,100.49, and this was an increase of \$14,139.65 over the last Triennial. The total presented for the triennium from Province 1 was \$173,944.39. The total realized from all the Provinces for the triennium was \$3,738,989.47. The total collected from all the Provinces for the year 2018 was \$1,283,216.21. The celebrant was the Rt. Rev. Andrew Doyle, Bishop of Texas, and he spoke both in Spanish and English. In spite of having so many people in the Convention Center, the communion went smoothly because of all the stations that were set up. He ended with the Blessing and dismissed us by saying, "You will be the miracle and light will shine through us into the world."

In addition to the different languages spoken throughout the service, there were signers as well to accommodate the many persons who are hearing impaired. I returned from this convention refreshed, revived and renewed. It was truly a spirit-filled experience for me. As I said in the beginning, "To whom much is given much is required." I know that God expects those he blesses with much to do much; I hope to be a good Steward with what God has given to me.

Claudia Dixon, ECCT ECW Delegate to Triennial Meeting



Rev. Cathy Boyd, Chaplain



Bishop Steven Charleston



Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers



UTO In-Gathering Service, Claudia Dixon, representing CT. The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry and The Reverend Gail Jennings

*Thank you
Lord,
For your gift of
love and
compassion
Amen*

A Time to Speak and Pray Outside The T. Don Hutto Residential Center, Taylor, Texas

On Sunday, July 8th at 12 noon, people from the General Convention and the ECW Triennial gathered in the blistering hot sun to bear witness regarding the actions of the U.S. Government separating children from their families. These families have come to the United States seeking asylum, fleeing often from life threatening conditions in their own lands. I was among those who gathered there.

We came in busses and cars, over 1,000 of us, out of loving concern for the women in this “for profit prison,” and for their children. We sang, we prayed and we sweated in the heat! Banners were held high, some in English, some in Spanish, reflecting our heartache. “The Episcopal Church Cares about This” stated one sign, and another in Spanish declared, “My name is Jesus. I have no documents.”

Our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, preached and was very clear that “we do not come in hatred, we do not come in bigotry, we do not come to put anyone down, we come to lift everyone up. We come in love...” He reiterated the words of Jesus to “Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor.” He shouted to us “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR” and we all responded “YES!”

The 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church heard 25 people the day before in their legislative session testify about issues regarding deportation of immigrants, condemning the separation of families and other concerns regarding immigration.

Episcopalians and others gathered because they care about these women and their families. We stood and prayed to be a witness to that fact. (Only women are detained at this center but fathers have been separated from their children as well.)

As we prayed and listened, I could not help but think about mothers and fathers, their children, and Jesus. Jesus was an infant when an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said “Get Up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” (Matt. 2:13) They too were a family fleeing persecution. How frightened they must have been, and I cannot even fathom the fear and heartbreak of children, some under 5 years of age, who were taken from their parents, not understanding why.

I cannot say that I understand it either. This is America, the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave--so why is this happening? And why can't we stop it? “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45b) We spoke, sang, and prayed out of love and anguish for all these persons, our neighbors. In addition, when our hearts are breaking, we bear witness with more than words. As for me, I could not stop the tears from falling down my face, mingling with the streams of sweat. Weeping comes naturally when we face such tragedy.

It was a very difficult day, but the sadness was lessened somewhat, seeing all the people who stood together showing that we care and desire an end to this government action.

I was thankful that we were able to turn toward the detention center, raise our hands together, and pray for God's healing love and help for all housed there.

I know that as of yesterday, July 26th, many children have been reunited with their families, but many have not. **HOWEVER, I DO NOT LOSE HEART!** Our God is a powerful God, and what may be impossible for man is possible with God. (Matt. 19:26) So I pray and trust in God.

Jesus knows where the children and parents are located, even if the officials do not. I encourage everyone to pray for justice and loving-kindness to prevail for all those seeking asylum here, and for God to provide for all their needs. Pray too for all those who are employed in the detention centers, that they will act kindly to all those who are detained there. Pray that God will help these families gain their freedom soon!

The Reverend Ellen G. Kennedy, ECCT ECW Chaplain



Claudia Dixon & Rev. Ellen G. Kennedy



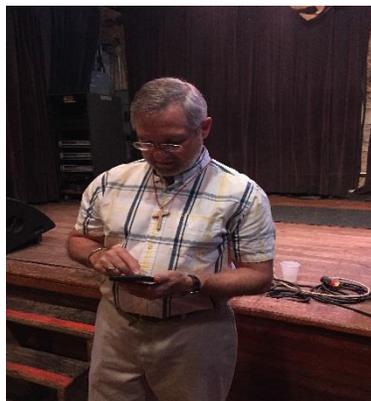
Erin Flinn, ECCT Central Region Missionary



*Gloria Rogers & Claudia Dixon
ECCT Dinner - STUBB'S*



*Roberta Stocksdale, ECW Secretary,
ECCT Dinner, STUBB'S*



*The Rt. Rev Ian Douglas enjoying
the ECCT Dinner at STUBB'S*



ECCT Dinner at STUBB'S

All photos Credits: submitted by Roberta Stocksdale or Shirley Greiman, unless otherwise noted.

Report on Workshops at 2018 Triennial

LISTENING AS A SACRED ART AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Presented by Kay Lindahl

Are you really listening to me?

Our culture values speaking more than listening, but without listening, speaking is nothing. 80% of our behavior is communication, but the adult attention span is only 8 seconds! We remember only about 5-10% of what we hear. The art of listening is providing a space to be heard. This space then becomes sacred. We need to become aware of our own triggers for poor listening, such as formulating our answer before we have even finished listening to what is being said.

We need to prepare to listen:

1. Cultivate stillness – silence in our souls
2. Take time for reflection – get to know our inner selves
3. Be present – listen to others

For further information go to www.sacredlistening.com for the top ten powerful listening practices; daily listening practices; and eleven ideas for making hard conversations work.

FOOD, FUN, AND FELLOWSHIP

Presented by Audra Ebner

Looking for a way to cultivate community, intentional food, and conversation, Audra and her mother, Evita Krislock, started a monthly faith-based 2-hour cooking class in which to share a meal with gentle conversations around the Fruits of the Spirit. (A good book on the Fruits of the Spirit is by Robert Strand).

They would use whole foods; eat local; eat organic food that was in season; find an activity; and make sure that it all produced a small carbon footprint. Audra and her mother did the shopping at the local farmer's market with donations from the participants (\$10 per person). Stations around the kitchen were prepared for chopping and food prep, and participants acted as sous chefs. The food was then prepared, cooked, and eaten around round tables while conversing about the Fruit of the Spirit that had been chosen. The model is flexible and could be adapted for your own use.

Mission on my Mind

Presented by Audra Ebner

Audra went to Colombia, South America, as a missionary with stars in her eyes and her imagination running on high speed about the things she would accomplish in the Name of the Lord Jesus. What she encountered was not what she had envisioned - - she lived with a family in the throes of grave illness of the father. Being disappointed was an understatement. Over time, she has come to realize that the gifts she gave were unconditional love of the ill father, which helped his family accept him the way he was; forgiveness by the son who did not want her there; and the translation of documents from Spanish into English, which she deemed most unimportant at the time. The gentle hand of our Loving Heavenly Father was clearly present in her ministrations. If you wish for information on how to support missionaries contact:

Krista Foundation www.kristafoundation.org

Young Adult Service Corps <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/young-adult-service-corps>

adventurewithaudra.blogspot.com (Audra's blog of her mission)

akrislock@gmail.com (Audra's email)

EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY

Presented by the Reverend Cathy Boyd, NECW

Chaplain "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl."

Deuteronomy 28:5

Everything in life is sacred, even baskets and kneading bowls. The whole point of the sacred through spiritual practice is to connect with God and each other. There is something called The Rule of Life. It is a pattern of behavior to which you daily commit to organize your spiritual life. For example, the Rule of St. Benedict is very disciplined: employing prayer, work, study, hospitality, and renewal on a daily basis. What is the main obstacle to your spiritual practice?

God's Time vs. Clock Time - - The clock marks time. Time marches on. We run by the clock. In contrast, God just IS. There is no marking of time with God. Time stands still. Think of Moses and the burning bush. The bush was aflame, but was not consumed by the fire. Moses turned aside and noticed the bush. God instructed Moses to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. Do we take time to stand on holy ground with our shoes off? Reframe the things you do - - think spiritual practices. Some examples of everyday spiritual practices might be wearing no clothing that hurts; laying your hands open in your lap; self-care such as eating nutritious food and taking a walk; turning aside and noticing the wonder of God's world. (Take off your shoes).

Reaching Out to our Neighbors - - Providing Showers to Homeless Women

“Wash and perfume yourself.” were Naomi’s words to Ruth (3:3) and no one takes them more seriously than the volunteers of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Austin, TX. They come each Tuesday of the month to the basement of St. David’s Episcopal Church where they provide warm showers for homeless women in a safe environment. The shower ministry takes care of their need for personal hygiene without risk of harassment or of their possessions being stolen.

Volunteers from St. Mark’s arrive early each Tuesday and prepare the bathrooms and showers for the women. (Men shower in other places in town.) Each woman is given a clean towel, washcloth, clean underwear, as well as soap, shampoo and conditioner. (Razors, toothpaste and brushes and socks are given as available).

The women sign in and have 20 minutes to shower. Their privacy and possessions secure, they can relax, wash and enjoy what several women call “their Spa day.” Many quotes from their “clients” were shared at this workshop. My favorites that described the experience for them are these: “...it is a real luxury to shower in private with clean towels provided. I may go into the shower grumpy, but I always come out happy.” and “I love the blow dryer, the fluffy towels and the quality of their products. It is all just phenomenal. I feel like a queen when I finish.”

Ms. Patricia Bullock presented this workshop and we could see her love and concern for the women they serve. She said how much the volunteers love doing this ministry. There are five volunteer teams of women, one for each week of the month. Part of their written statement to us says, “It is our hope that we are empowering these women by demonstrating care and concern for them.” If the faces and statements of the women shown on their video presentation is any indication, they surely know they are cared for by the volunteers and by God.

The work and witness to their “clients” and all who know of this ministry (including everyone in the workshop) was a powerful one. They encouraged us to pray about starting a ministry similar to this one in our own area. A church or other facility may have showers that can be used even if your church does not. I found out that there is a church in CT that has showers near the gymnasium like St. David’s does.

Jesus told His disciples to love God and “to love your neighbor as yourself.” (Mark 12:31) and He continues: “...there is no greater commandment than these.” Well, I think these women would agree! The love they experience at St. David’s and the Trinity Center makes them feel *Greatly Loved!*

If you wish more information contact:

The Trinity Center
304 E. 7th St.
Austin, TX 78701
OR
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
2128 Barton Hills
Austin, TX 78704

Facility may have available showers

Rev. Ellen Kennedy wrote this one article as she attended this particular workshop

Faith Advocacy 101

This workshop covered how people of faith can and must be engaged in faithful advocacy to uphold our vision of a just and loving society for all. People of faith are eager to make their voices heard, but yet may lack the know-how to be good citizen activists.

All faith traditions teach the golden rule, "Treat others as we would like to be treated." Christians know it as Jesus' 2nd commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.

The 3 points to keep in mind when talking with an elected official are:

Speak as a person of faith:

- Speak from the heart about a bill from the perspective of your faith Give your personal story:
- Sharing your story and underlying values will help you connect with your elected officials Remember that your elected officials work for you:
- You can put your faith into action by meeting with your legislators: you will find that the majority of elected officials are glad when "real people" pay them a visit , even if you disagree on policy

Once you get an opportunity to have a meeting with an elected official, there are 10 points to keep in mind for an effective, faithful advocacy meeting:

- Introduce yourself
- Start on a positive note
- Pick one or two issues to focus on in the meeting
- Remember you are there as a person of faith
- Speak from the heart
- Be specific
- Keep the meeting short and sweet
- Be honest and straightforward
- Just like your mother said, always be polite
- End on a positive note

One issue, Environmental Stewardship, for example, is an integral part of all faiths, because we can cherish the gifts entrusted to us and because we want to leave a better world for our children.

Roberta Stocksdales, ECCT ECW Secretary

ECCT ECW Distinguished Woman of Connecticut

What an honor and privilege it was to be chosen as the ECCT ECW Distinguished Woman. Want to thank you for this award and let you know what a thrill it was to go back to the Triennial Meeting and see the women/men I had known, and worked with during my six years on the National ECW Board. Had the distinct pleasure to work with approximately eight, very competent, empowered, leadership women receiving Distinguished Women Awards that day. More than 60 women, from all nine provinces, were honored with a luncheon, (on July 8), a certificate and a Distinguished Woman pin, in recognition of their dedicated service they do for their home diocese.

The Speaker and presenter of the Distinguished Women Awards, was Ms Yewande Austin, founder of The Global Institute (formerly the Change Rocks Institute) for Diversity and Change, which she formed in 2004,. She is an international trainer in strategic diversity leadership, multidisciplinary education, social responsibility, and youth development. Her mission to fight human trafficking and is now looking to build another home in Alheri Village - the sustainable community she is developing in Nigeria to protect Boko Haram conflict survivors from violence, rape and trafficking! As an honorary Cultural Ambassador to the United States Embassy (Malawi, Africa), her message of solidarity continues to foster critical relationships between America and our global community through the transformational power of music. When she is not lecturing, Ms. Austin humanitarian organization, the Change Rocks Foundation, produces music-based empowerment initiatives from Africa to the Americas where extreme poverty threatens the lives of millions of vulnerable children every day. As an M.A. candidate in Ethnomusicology at the prestigious University of Sheffield in England, her research is dedicated to uncovering our profound connection between music and socio-economic transformation. It is this inspiring commitment to humanity that has ignited a global movement.

Was so nice to see the NECW had continued having the GFS girls participating.... As it is a great experience for them to learn what Triennial Meeting and General Convention is all about.

What a pleasure to just go to the Triennial Meeting and not worry about doing any work and enjoy the comrade and programs that you have read about in this Communiqué.

Shirley Greiman, ECCT ECW Distinguished Woman



*Shirley Greiman, Distinguished Woman of CT,
Ms Yewande Austin, Presenter & Speaker for the Distinguished Women Luncheon
Photo credit: John Dlugolecki, Dlugolecki Photography*

National Altar Guild Association (NAGA)



The Triennial Meeting of the National Altar Guild Association (NAGA) was held at the JW Marriott Hotel, Austin, Texas, from Friday, July 6th thru Thursday, July 12, 2018. Lynn Hendricks, NAGA President from the Diocese of Alabama, greeted us at Registration and provided up to date changes in the weeklong agenda. Alice Scarborough, Diocese of Texas, gave an orientation and training in the Altar Guild Sacristy for the Holy Eucharist services during General Convention. The evening Eucharist at the Convention Center included the 2018 United Thank Offering In-Gathering beginning at 5:45 p.m. It was an honor to see our Claudia Dixon present the ECCT UTO offering to the Presiding Bishop. Upon returning to our hotel, Dianne

Walters, 1st Vice President, from the Diocese of Central Gulf Coast, arranged for a Tex-Mex buffet as an appropriate conclusion to our first day in Austin.

On July 7th the Reverend Bill King, NAGA Chaplain, presided at Eucharist at our hotel and conducted a ceremony called The Blessing of the Hands. It was very moving and meaningful to our group of Altar Guilders. We also attended two workshops. The first was Floral Ministry, given by Chris Farber, which included weaving palm crosses. The second was a study of Papyrus, given by Carol McCrady, noted for creating her own papyrus as a medium for Celtic and Renaissance style designs. This day ended with an invitation to attend a Revival Meeting followed by a Texas sized party hosted by the Diocese ofwait for it.....TEXAS. Such excitement for all!

The next morning, much to our delight, the representatives from Almy sponsored a breakfast and brief program for us. After Eucharist at the Convention Center, the ECW held their Distinguished Women Luncheon at the Hilton Hotel. Our own Shirley Greiman was selected from ECCT and honored for all her work on our behalf. Later on Sunday, we had a presentation on Recruitment and Retention of altar guild members, followed by Bingo – Altar Guild Style. Lot of laughs, but the competition was fierce! For our efforts, cookies and milk awaited us!

Monday morning, Fr. Bill led us in Morning Prayer at the hotel. The atmosphere was just exploding as we awaited a visit from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry! He did not disappoint. With his robes flowing, his arms waving, his greeting cheerful, his blessings bouncing off the walls, he entered our meeting room and took over. He extolled the virtues of the members of the altar guild and thanked us at least a million times for all that we do quietly, efficiently, and behind the scenes. His presence at a NAGA meeting was the first, ever, for a Presiding Bishop!

Settling down, Keynote Speaker Demi Prentiss presented her daylong workshop called “Radical Sending – Go to Love and Serve.” The workshop’s intention was to empower the laity for their ministries beyond the church doors. We were treated to a luncheon buffet. Eucharist at the Convention Center was held at 5:15 p.m.

Tuesday morning again found us at Morning Prayer at the hotel. We looked forward to three workshops: Rubrics of the BCP by Lynn Hendricks, Book of Occasional Services by Fr. Bill King, and Liturgical Arts by Jenna Burns, Liturgical Artist. Her theme was “A Visual Interpretation of Sacred Spaces.”

The workshop concluded with a simple hands-on Liturgical appliqué project using paper-

backed fusible web and embellishments. I chose Pentecost for my square. Well, I think it looks like a dove.

At the Business meeting, new officers for 2018-2021 were elected as follows: President, Dianne Walters, Prov. IV; 1st VP, Albe Larson, Prov. VIII; 2nd VP, Donna Anderson, Prov. VIII; Secretary, Sandra Wilson, Prov. VII; Treasurer, Marcia Himes, Prov. VI; Nominating Chair, Katrina Packard, Prov. VII. The new officers will be installed at the closing NAGA Eucharist.

Did you ever wonder what the Painted Churches of Texas were all about? We found out on our field trip on Wednesday when we visited five churches. Although painted white on the outside, the insides were filled with colorful murals, statues, sculptures, and paintings. The churches were built between 1850 and the turn of the century, with money raised by the immigrants, mostly from Germany and Czech. It was amazing to see the splendor of the churches.

One stop at St. James Church in LaGrange was personally thrilling. The rector was the Rev. Eric Hungerford, whose grandfather was once an assistant priest at my home parish of St. Mary's, Manchester. Rev. Eric was also the NAGA chaplain three years ago when we first connected. How exciting that he is now the Rector with his own church. The church served us Coffee & Kolaches for breakfast before our grand tour.

Lunch was provided at High Hill Church and Judge Dan Mueller gave us a brief talk about the history of the painted churches. Later, we attended a Social at Sengelmann Dance Hall, and once again enjoyed a Texas buffet.

All good things end, and so it was for me. The closing Eucharist included the installation of Officers. And then, Lunch.

It was a fabulous Triennial Meeting, and I am looking forward to the next one in Baltimore, MD. Hope to see you there!

Jean Elizabeth Kelsey, ECW-Altar Guild Directress





Girls' Friendly Society - Connecticut

A little information about GFS:

Girls ages 5 and up are invited to join! We are a Christian based service organization within the Episcopal Church. Our meetings consist of a time of worship, a themed discussion with an activity or craft and refreshment and social time.

GFS – Connecticut currently consists of three branches- St. Luke's, New Haven, Grace and St. Peter's, Hamden and St. Paul's, Wallingford.

Our season of meetings begins in September and runs to June, coinciding somewhat with the school year. We do not usually meet in the summer except for special events, such as National Assembly or World Council meetings.

Last Spring, our three branches got together for a fun Creative Arts Day event at a local art studio in Wallingford. The girls had a good time creating their masterpieces together. Following the art class, we all met at St. Paul's for lunch and games.

The girls inspired the completion of the fun centerpieces for the ECW luncheon. We used pictures from our Creative Arts Day event to adorn the plants that were on the tables.

In June, we celebrated the end of our GFS year with a camp weekend at Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, Connecticut. We camped for a weekend. We had 14 girls in attendance. The girls had fun hiking, swimming, doing crafts, making s'mores at the campfire, worshipping together by the lakeside, staying up late and watching movies. This is an annual event and we look forward to next June 2019!

In September 2018, our branch meetings will start up again. Grace and St. Peter's group meets on Sundays after church. St. Luke's branch meets on Monday evenings and St. Paul's meets on a Tuesday and a Saturday each month. Each branch has a variety of ages in their groups. St. Paul's has both junior and senior girls making for interesting meetings and double the preparation and activities to keep everyone engaged! St. Paul's senior girls will be participating in a new international mission (The Malala Fund - for education of young girls around the world) and their junior members will work on a local mission project in Connecticut (still to be determined). Grace and St. Peter's and St. Luke's girls are still in the Junior age groups. Grace and St. Peter's are following the GFS symbol program.

This program is church based and teaches our younger kids more about the precepts of their faith and the church. It is a great introduction for our younger girls. St. Luke's uses a modified symbol program. They continue to serve their parish in a variety of activities including their annual "shoe boxes of care" for their elderly shut-ins. These colorfully decorated shoeboxes contain personal care items, socks, etc. and a homemade quick bread, which is distributed at Christmastime.

This lets their elderly friends know that they are loved and thought about. GFS-CT branches continue to serve in their churches and communities and even the world!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank ECW-Connecticut for your generous donations to GFS-CT. Your donations help us send girls to summer camp each year and also help to fund special programs that may be above and beyond what the branch(es) can afford. In 2019, we are having our National Assembly in Pennsylvania and will be sending Junior and Youth delegates from our branches. This is a good way for the girls to experience GFS on a national level and it is our hope that they continue in the organization. This past summer, our National GFS had the opportunity to send a number of girls to the national Episcopal Church conference in Texas! Our girls were able to work side by side with ladies from the ECW! From the reports received, it was a wonderful event. Exposure to events such as our ECW meetings locally and nationally may just spark the interest in further participation when our girls become young adults! Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate!

We will keep you all apprised of the activities of our branches and will try to include pictures next time!

Karen Rowe, President, Girls' Friendly Society-Connecticut