

# League Lingo

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
London Diocesan Newsletter**



## **Vol.2 No. 3 Special Issue 2025**

### **From the Desk of the Editor**

Welcome to this special issue of League Lingo. The 2025 London Diocesan Convention and Annual Meeting of Members in April was a busy and exciting time for us. Thank you to our sisters in Huron Perth who made everyone feel welcome as soon as they arrived.

Space does not allow us to provide accounts of all that happened in the three days we gathered in Stratford nor is there space for all the photos that were taken. It is difficult to capture in words the atmosphere of love, sisterhood and faith that permeated all that we did. The range of topics presented, touched all our pillars in faith, service and social justice.

As always, the masses were beautiful and the homilies delivered by our spiritual advisor Fr. Paul and Bishop Fabbro, were reminders of the important role we have in our society.

Let's reminisce!

*Nelly Kelders*  
Editor



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### **Diocesan Executive Council 2025-27**

**President:** Denise Lalonde Morris  
**Spiritual Advisor:** Fr. Paul Kim  
**Past-president:** Theresa Ryan  
**Vice-president:** Nelly Kelders  
**Treasurer:** Mary Clare Latimer  
**Secretary:** Colleen Kelly  
**Faith Chair:** Jeanne Lauzon  
**Service Chair:** Bea Taylor  
**Social Justice Chair:** Linda Van Raay

## From the President's Desk

Hello everyone. Thank you to all who helped me as I transitioned to become the new president of the London Diocesan Council. Some people may think my rise to the presidency has been on a fast track as it has only taken me 16 years to arrive at the top.

Most of my adult life has been spent in Newfoundland and Labrador where I taught students in a variety of age groups and with a variety of learning abilities. After teaching in isolation for most of those years, my husband, Ed and I retired to Huron County. From the first months of my return, I hit the ground running. I have not stopped promoting The Catholic Women's League of Canada as the greatest opportunity for any female from the age of 16 and beyond. Where else can you meet fellow sisters from across our great country and join them in our faith, being fulfilled and having lots of fun at the same time?

It is my hope that in the next two years we embrace all the opportunities available to us and fulfill the request of our beloved Pope Francis to go forward as Pilgrims of Hope.

Our Lady of Good Counsel, bless you all!

Sincerely

Denise Lalonde Morris



**Mary Bannon**  
**2025 President's Farewell Address to the 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of**  
**Members, Stratford, ON**

*Here I am Lord; send me.* And indeed I have come to the realization that this call I have received has instilled in me a sense of the love of God and the people placed in my path. So many times this love has been showered on me.

I can hardly believe that my term as president will soon be over. It has been an eventful two years of faith, service and social justice for us. I have been so pleased and impressed by the work of the councils; the CWL women of London diocese.

For me personally, the last nine months have been a time of great change. I feel as though God has given birth in me as He calls me to go where God sends me and do what God wants me to do at this stage in my life.

After I fell last July at the provincial convention in Sudbury, I had several more falls, resulting with me ending up in hospital where I was diagnosed with a minor stroke.

I have so much gratitude in my heart for all of you who prayed for me and sent me cards, especially to the executive council of the diocese. They stepped forward in faith, particularly Vice-president Denise Lalonde Morris, who accepted tasks I could not do. They accomplished so much when I could not.

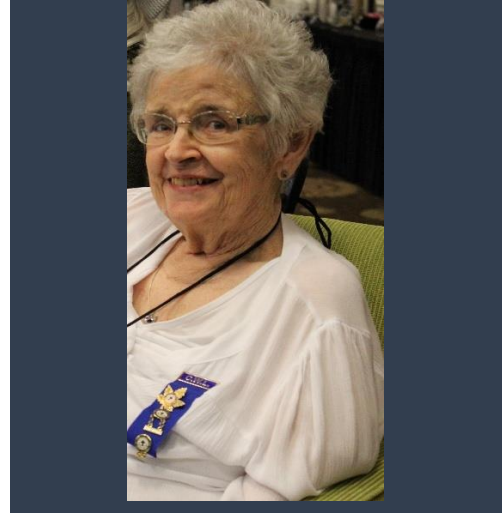
I have developed more patience, more understanding of waiting on the Lord – *Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall run and not be weary.*

I was only six weeks out of the hospital, when my brother Pat was suddenly called home to the Lord. Once again my CWL sisters came through for me. Special thanks to Father Paul Kim who came to concelebrate Pat's arrival to his forever home. Your love and support were so real.

I am also thankful for you and your attendance at Regional Days, Retreat Day at the Shrine in Merlin, your own personal councils' acts of service and desire for social justice.

Through my experiences the diocesan council has held me in prayer, patience and presence. I have learned that this prayer, patience, and presence of God and His people, have called me to a new birth.

My whole life has changed in the past two years of my term as president. I had plans but God said, "Surprise Mary!" God is full of surprises and I have learned to be open to them and be ready to respond, *Here I am Lord, send me – Joyfully!*





## THE JOY OF MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOP

Jeanne Lauzon, Essex Régional Chair

How awesome it was to welcome over 100 ladies to this lively workshop on Monday afternoon. Judging by the laughter, it was received with joy and sisterhood as the dice were rolled, the *Cap of Joy* was passed and many ideas and stories were shared.

Father Kim (impersonator Lori Alexander) was a hit with the audience and the participation was wonderful! After listening to ONE answer from each table, we learned a lot about the various activities happening in our diocese.



Many ladies joined the League to promote positive change. Being called to serve was the most popular answer to why they joined the CWL. They remain members to share in sisterhood, friendship and prayer. Bringing resolutions to the government was also very important to the respondents. "Going with my mother or mother-in-law" was my favourite reason for attending meetings!

Our councils certainly met the Faith needs of their members and parishes. Honour Guards, funeral prayers and memorial services were popular replies. Saying farewell and sharing memories of deceased members is a cherished tradition. Masses on the feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel are celebrated as we pray for each other and the endeavours of the League.



The list of Service ideas is so long, it is difficult to name just a few: "Blessing Bags" were filled by students; fundraisers for the Ukraine; outreach dinners; senior visits; and cards sent were just a few. Members also participated in RCIA and Catholic Girls' League. So many worthy causes were mentioned. Social Justice ideas were plentiful: showing the movie *The Stone Pillow*; Red Dress Days were observed in memory of the lives of indigenous women who were lost; and The Three Nation Tour was an interesting activity. Guest speakers included topics on human trafficking, palliative care and Choose Life. So many activities, so little time! We hope you went away with at least ONE new idea.



## Life Members, A Whole Lot of Experience

Edited by Patricia Rivest

Marie Theresa Lamphier, Life Member Liaison to the Diocesan Executive Council, gave a presentation at the convention, *No, You Don't Have to be 80 Years Old to be a Life Member*. She described the criteria used to determine how Life Members were chosen and appointed by our National Executive, as outlined in the Manual of Policy and Procedures. She also highlighted all the members who were elected to the provincial council and what positions they held. Some members worked on many task forces over the years and they continue to assist at any level required. Why would you want to go on after serving at the diocesan level? "It's a lot of fun...you learn new things and you engage with lots of new people, and share thoughts and experiences."

Marie Theresa also mentioned that the Life Members were all willing to assist parish councils at any time. She suggested that councils may even ask them to give a small

presentation so that they could get to know them just a little bit better. She humorously or in a light hearted way mentioned how the life members were known.

There are currently 11 Life Members across the diocese as Shirley George passed away last year. Shirley was an inspiration to all, as she attained the position of past provincial president.

Marie Theresa also highlighted the position of the Military Ordinariate as one of our members is a past provincial president of the military ordinariate.

*You can see that we are just ordinary women doing what the Lord sends us to do! Be open to the Holy Spirit!*

Marie Therese Lampier



*Life Members with Provincial President Colleen Martin*

## Truth & Reconciliation Presentation

By Jeanne Lauzon

We were blessed to have Kathy Furlong and Gwen Waeijen join us for an inspiring workshop about Truth and Reconciliation in our diocese. Gwen began with the interesting story of Turtle Island. When all of creation began to fight and brother turned against brother, killing one another over hunting grounds and other disagreements, Kitchi-Manitou decided to purify the Earth. He did this with water. The water came in the form of a great flood, or *mush-ko'-be-wun'*, upon the Earth destroying the Anishinabe people and most of the animals as well. Only Nanaboozhoo, the central figure in many of the Anishinabe oral traditions, was able to survive the flood, along with a few animals and birds who managed to swim and fly. Nanaboozhoo floated on a huge log searching for land, but none was to be found as the Earth was now covered by the great flood. He thought if someone could dive to the bottom and bring back some earth, they could get help from the Four Winds and Kitchi-Manitou to create new land. After several animals and birds tried, almost drowning, none were able to get to the bottom. Then a soft, muffled voice was heard. "I can do it," it spoke softly. At first no one could see who it was that spoke up. Then, the little *Wazhushk*, muskrat stepped forward. "I'll try," he repeated. He did reach the bottom, he grabbed some earth and made it to the surface, but gave up his life to do it. Sadness and sorrow followed. Suddenly Nanaboozhoo exclaimed, "Look, there is something in his paw!" Nanaboozhoo carefully opened the tiny paw. All the animals gathered close to see what was held so tightly there. Muskrat's paw opened and revealed a small ball of Earth. The animals all shouted with joy. Muskrat sacrificed his life so that life on Earth could begin anew. Nanaboozhoo took the piece of Earth from Muskrat's paw. Nanaboozhoo put the piece of Earth on the turtle's back. Suddenly, the wind blew from each of the Four Directions. The tiny piece of Earth on the turtle's back began to grow. It grew and grew and grew

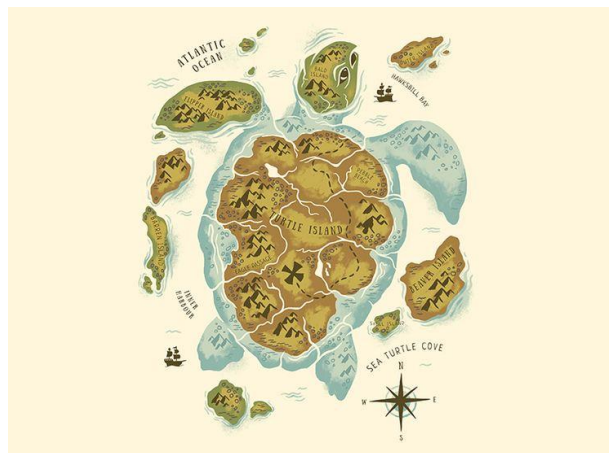
until it formed a *mi-ni-si'*, or island in the water.

The island grew larger and larger, but still the turtle bore the weight of the Earth on his back. Nanaboozhoo and the animals all sang and danced in a widening circle on the growing island. After a while, the Four Winds ceased to blow and the waters became still. A huge island sat in the middle of the water, and today that island is known as North America. Some of this seems so familiar, creation, people not obeying and fighting, a flood and a redeemer willing to pay the ultimate price for the sake of others.

An interesting presentation followed with many pictures of the work being done with and by the indigenous people. They shared their involvement with Pope Francis' visit to Canada as well as their time spent in Rome. They spoke of the injustice done to their people and how their rights were eroded when they were not allowed to sell farming equipment, then not allowed to buy it. Later they were kept from selling their crops off their lands and only to each other. This was just one example of many where promises and agreements were broken or disregarded. They also mentioned several resources such as: \*21 Things You Do Not Know About the Indian Act

\*The speaker series Path to Solidarity - 11 steps  
\*The Case for Solidarity

\*Reconciliation ACTION





## Synodality and Conversation of the Spirit

By Nelly Kelders

The keynote address of the 105<sup>th</sup> Convention of The Catholic Women's League of Canada was delivered by Linda Staudt, retired Director of Education for the London/Middlesex Catholic School Board. Linda is the co-chair of the Diocese of London's Synod. She is one of seven lay-people from North America, (one for four from Canada) appointed by Pope Francis to the Synod in Rome in 2023 and 2024. There were 478 voting delegates: cardinals, bishops, clergy, and laity.

She described what it was like to be part of this assembly and how inspiring it was for those in attendance.

Prayer was key. Without it, there could be no Synod. The Holy Spirit would guide them in their deliberations. They began with a three-day retreat. Silence was an important tool in what they did when discerning. The silence was eight minutes in duration.



The method used for discussion was the Conversation of the Spirit. In this process, each participant speaks for four minutes, without interruption from anyone else at the table. The most important thing is to listen to what is being said by others, not thinking about what we will say when it's our turn to speak.

When voting took place, two-thirds of the delegates had to agree on the statement in order for it to move forward. Most did.

Some of the main themes of the Synod included:

- \*Conversation of the Spirit as a tool for synodality;

- \*Welcoming, listening, including and pastorally accompanying;



- \*Expanded role of women in Ministry and leadership

- \*Ongoing formation for all in Synodality; and

- \*Mission in the Digital Environment.

At the end of the Synod, Pope Francis accepted the final report as presented and said he would make no changes.

The report can be found on the Synod website at [www.synodresources.org](http://www.synodresources.org).

Resources for the Implementation Phase are posted. All dioceses will be required to report to the Vatican in 2028 as to their progress.



## Mental Health In Elders

Our final speaker on Tuesday was Frances Taylor. Her topic resonated with the majority of the audience. While we don't like to think of ourselves as being elders, we all have family and friends who fit the description.



While most of us think of mental health as a negative, she said others see it as a positive because we need to understand what causes our down times. She said mental health is more than a diagnosis, it is about our everyday living. People need to talk about their feelings and people need social connections to stay healthy. Frances went on to describe the symptoms of depression which included: being depressed for more than two weeks; social withdrawal; unexplained fatigue, change in sleep patterns; confusion, disorientation; weight increase/decrease; feelings of helplessness, worthlessness, misplaced guilt; difficulty maintaining their home or finances; and changes in appearance.



## Ageism – It's a Thing!

Another issue seniors are dealing with is **Ageism**; being discriminated against because of age. More than 63 percent of people over 65 have experienced ageism.

Some forms of ageism include being patronized or being over-accommodated; and not being given the same medical treatment as a younger person.



Frances ended her talk with a list of actions that contribute to good health.

- \*Make efforts to connect - be social
- \*Have a reason to get up every day
- \*Find new interests and hobbies
- \*Healthy and balanced meals
- \*Exercise
- \*Religion – faith, spirituality
- \*Sleep hygiene – consistent wake and sleep times
- \*Natural light – get outside
- \*Self-care, it is not being selfish!





## Introducing the London Diocesan Social Justice Award Winners for 2025

This year the London Diocesan Council was pleased to present the annual Social Justice Award to two very deserving women in our diocese. We congratulate them on their achievements and thank them for all they do for those less fortunate than themselves at home and abroad

**Linda Kensley**



Linda is a member of St. Michael CWL in Bright's Grove. Within the parish community she wears many hats, including sacristan, eucharistic minister and lector, member of the parish liturgical team and decorating committee. Her real passion though is working with the less fortunate. When her parish was established 38 years ago, Linda and her late husband Gary became involved in the newly established St. Vincent de Paul conference. Until a pantry could be set up in the church, they ran the food pantry from the basement of their home. Linda remains a dedicated volunteer and currently president of the conference. She schedules volunteers and participates in the delivery of food to those in need. She organizes the annual Yule Glow at Christmas, ensuring no child is left without. Currently, she is the interim president of the Sarnia-Lambton St. Vincent de Paul Particular Council. Her other commitment is to the Sarnia-Lambton Deanery Migrant Worker Ministry assisting with the Spanish mass, dinner/socials, start-up care packages and rides to events.

**Linda Hulshof**



St. Patrick's CWL in Kinkora was proud to nominate Linda for the Social Justice Award. Linda is an active member of *Homes for Hope* a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of families in El Salvador. Linda is looking forward to her tenth trip to El Salvador to building homes for families. As a member of *Homes for Hope*, she raises money for her trip and to pay the cost of building one home. On each trip, the volunteers build 10-12 homes with the help of local people. Much needed clothing, medicine and school supplies are also gathered by Linda, to take to the community. She has developed a special relationship with one of the young men, Carlos, who she communicates with regularly. Linda has used her creativity to raise money for her cause: creating greeting cards and recycling materials into lovely crafts. When people purchase her items, she tells them about the people she supports in El Salvador, thus creating awareness of the plight of less fortunate people in Central America.

## **London Diocesan Annual Meeting of Members (AMM)**

This year the Diocesan Executive Council made the decision to implement a new model for the business meeting as experienced in 2024 at the National Annual Meeting of Members, in Saskatoon. This model is based on the requirements for Not-for-Profit organizations.

The minutes of our 2024 Annual Meeting of Members and the Annual Report book were posted on the diocesan website 10 days prior to our 2025 meeting. The financial reports were sent directly to parish presidents for their review by the diocesan treasurer, Mary Clare Latimer.

During the business meeting, the president, parliamentarian, spiritual advisor, treasurer and secretary were seated at the head table. All other executive members sat in the audience amongst members and delegates.

**President Mary Bannon**, in her report, told the audience how impressed she was with the work they had done in the past year. She expressed her appreciation to the executive council for their team work during her time away due to illness.

**Acting-president Denise Lalonde Morris** also thanked everyone for their attendance at the convention and AMM. She noted all the activities the councils were involved in. Denise thanked Ontario Provincial President Colleen Martin for her support during the past nine months and the parish presidents for submitting their annual reports. She also noted the change in format to the AMM and urged all members to consider coming to provincial convention and AMM in London in July. The members were also informed that the Diocesan Policy and Procedures Manual would be updated this summer.

**Father Paul Kim** described his ministry of presence to the diocesan council in his report. He reminded us of the importance of renewing ourselves spiritually: Lenten retreat, Shrine Day in Merlin and executive retreat in Oxley. He noted that we are powerful women of faith.

**Treasurer Mary Clare Latimer** presented a report on the financial health of our organization. She presented the Statement of Revenues and Disbursements and our accounts. She noted that in our Per Capita Report for March, we currently have 6,591 members in 85 councils. The auditing firm of Baker Tilly will be retained to complete the 2025 Notice of Reader review.

### **Elections 2025**

**Past-president Theresa Ryan** announced the results of the instructed vote for the election of officers for the 2025-2027 term.

Vice-president – Nelly Kelders

Secretary – Vacant

Treasurer – Mary Clare Latimer

Pillars – Shirley Ann Beecroft, Bea Taylor and Linda Van Raay

Mary Bannon read Denise Lalonde Morris' letter accepting the position of president for the term 2025-2027.

The Annual Meeting of Members was adjourned at 10:33am as all business had been completed.

The new executive council was installed by Fr. Paul Kim at the closing mass at Immaculate Conception Parish in Stratford.

## Her Enthusiasm and Love of League Is Contagious!

We were truly blessed to have Provincial President Colleen Martin present for our entire convention and AMM. Colleen spent the three days mingling with her sisters in the London Diocese. During the sessions, she sat with the ladies, and heard their stories, thereby getting to know us that much more. Our members were thrilled they got to sit with the provincial president and talk to her about The Catholic Women's League of Canada.



In her provincial report to the members, she made several points for us to reflect upon.

- It is important for councils to be a community.
- Some women still think that they have to do what's always been done. They don't.
- Be open to change or else we will miss opportunities.
- What can we do for others to get them to join the League?
- There is a need to adapt what we do so that we can attract younger women.
- We are never alone. Join Zoom workshops, where we can share and learn.



- Life Members are here to help. Ask them.
- Women will join us if we are full of joy.
- Have hope, have faith.
- God has a plan for us. He will provide.
- We have to be open to the plan He has for us or else we will miss opportunities He has planned for us.
- Local councils are why The Catholic Women's League of Canada thrives.
- If your council needs something, you only need to ask.





## **? ? ? You Asked Us ? ? ?**

One of the sessions during the convention was a Q & A with Colleen Martin, Denise Lalonde Morris and Theresa Ryan. Below are questions and answers from that session and questions from the 2025 convention evaluations.

### **When should the land acknowledgement be read at our meeting, before or after the prayer?**

The land acknowledgement should be read before the meeting begins. If a council chooses to do it after the prayer, there will be no repercussions from the diocesan or provincial executives.

### **Why isn't the annual CWL fee the same for all the councils in the League? Some councils pay more than others.**

It is up to each council to set their fee for each year. Some councils have chosen to increase their fees beyond the required amount and keep the excess for other projects. At the least the council needs to set a fee that covers the cost of paying the diocesan, provincial and national dues.

### **The cost of the health break at the convention was expensive. The cost for a cookie was \$10. Why can't we bring in our own snacks instead?**

The hotel sets the cost of all meals and health breaks. The hosting region negotiates the best deal they can for the event. Outside food is not allowed to be brought into the venue. Some hotels will fine the host if they determine food from the outside has been brought in that could have been purchased from the venue operator. Anyone requiring special foods because of dietary restrictions, should keep food in their room for that purpose but not bring it into the convention hall.

### **How does someone become a member of the diocesan executive council?**

All those who are eligible to run for the executive council are invited to let their name stand at election time for one of the executive positions. Currently a person has to be a past-president of their parish council to be eligible. The national executive has been reviewing the criteria and we look forward to hearing about new criteria before our next elections take place in 2027.

### **Why wasn't there a schedule for the regional council photos? Some people missed the photo opportunity.**

The decision to take photos of the councils in attendance was made at the last minute. This activity was very popular so we will make sure there is a published schedule for photos in 2026.

### **Why are we reducing the convention/AMM in 2026 to two days?**

We heard from many councils that the three-day convention is becoming too costly for their members to attend. Most dioceses in Ontario have either one- or two-day conventions/AMMs. The executive council decided to reduce the number of days to two in 2026 and 2027. Monday will be the convention day and Tuesday will be the AMM. Delegates will still have the option to arrive the Sunday before or stay until Wednesday if they don't want to travel at the end of the day.











*Well done,  
Ladies!*





### **You Get the Last Word: What Your Evaluations Told Us!**

- Panel discussion was interesting and educational – please repeat
- Enjoyed the *Joy of Membership* presentation and I loved the JOY hat. Loved the Shaking and Standing – Here I am Lord.
- Resolutions workshop was great.
- Need to use the recommendations of the Synod. Try a Conversation of the Spirit at a Diocesan Development Day
- Monday's mass and choice for banquet was excellent.
- Enjoyed the collaboration & welcomeness of the Diocesan Executive. There is such an incredible sisterhood to witness & it is such an honour to be able to do so.
- Policy and Procedure Manual workshop would be wonderful.
- More time to mingle with other council members.
- It was my first convention. Truly an encouraging/welcoming room of women.
- Consider bringing young ladies from a local high school for a morning session and lunch; informing of what we do; consider what might attract them.
- More speakers to do with our faith: retreats, Cursillo, someone's faith journey, Catholic book clubs.