



Province I Episcopal Church Women National Board Province 1 ECWC Representative report.

I have had the pleasure and unexpected honor to serve on the National Board for the past five years. My term will end at Triennial June 23-28, 2024 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Over the past year the board has addressed the continuing need for humanitarian help at the Mexican border by supporting an important outreach project through December 2023. Plaza de Paz Respite Center in San Antonio, Tx run by the diocese of West Texas. The center helps with short term housing, assistance with travel arrangements and provides backpacks with food kits and travel essentials for many immigrants. Many ECWs have thus far contributed over \$3,000.

The board meets every few months in one of the nine Provinces in the Episcopal Church. At each meeting a \$1,000 (one thousand dollar) donation is made to the diocese we meet. We have helped a domestic violence shelter in New Hampshire. In Chicago, where we met in May, \$1,000 was given to the Renaissance Cooperative for the Homeless which is next door to St. Thomas Episcopal Church which is the oldest black congregation in Chicago. They house over 140 people in a rehabilitated YMCA built in 1880. They also have another facility that provides housing to families, particularly grandparents who now find themselves raising their grandchildren.

The board will meet twice more this year: in Syracuse, NY in August and Omaha, Nebraska in November. In 2024 we will meet before Triennial in Louisville

As you know there was no Triennial. We had already been working with the two organizations that were going to be the Triennial charity recipients. After cancellation notice we had sent out a request for donations to for each of them. \$5,000 was received so the board voted to double that. Thus, Paul's Place received our Community Connection gift, and Sutton Scholars High School Enrichment program received our United Gift of \$5,000 each. We also sent to those registered the cross that had been designed for that Triennial and to the Distinguished Woman her pin and the program booklet.

It is customary at each board meeting for the province representative to give a report of what have been the items of discussion and actions of the province board. The following is what I reported at the May meeting in Chicago. I reported what the province 1 board had been discussing and I thought I would include it in this report.

Background: Over these last few months the Province 1 Executive Committee has been meeting monthly and discussing how to stay: viable – vital – visible – vibrant, while dealing with the reality of a small and diminishing leadership team. Connect, share and converse is still important in today's world; and, that deepens faith and empowers leadership. But how can we honor our past and transform for the future? Or do we gracefully exit as provincial organization?

The Province 1 ECW Executive Committee brainstormed about "how will we continue from here", and for the immediate future the following themes/ideas and some potential projects surfaced:

Themes and Ideas

1. With slim leadership and energy, we need to do what is realistic and doable.
2. National ECW News-blasts have been very well received and successful. We might use that as a model.
3. Becoming a networking group: representative, not programmatic, but creating visibility for women's ministries in the province.



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4. Using our platforms: Zoom, E-news, Website, and Facebook we could gather interesting stories about what women are doing in ministry in Province 1 and feature them in a prominent way.
 - Reach out to various people in the Province for ideas about highlighting women's ministries/programs.
 - Find diocesan contacts to seek out interesting stories about women's ministries in their diocese. The communications missioners, and diocesan newsletters are a good place to start.
 - Partner with other dioceses that are already organizing programs of interest to women and promote them.
 - Keep an eye out for social action needs and highlight them.
 - Network with other groups to increase women's ministry visibility.
 - Attend the Connecticut ECW Annual Meeting to promote Province 1 ECW.
 - Explore Provinces joining together; for example, Province 1 ECW could work with/join Province 2 ECW.
 - Contribute to the Province 1 Synod Newsletter. The Province 1 coordinator has asked us to provide a women's news highlight each month for their Newsletter, which will make Province ECW more visible.

The biggest challenge in Province 1 ECW is leadership. All five positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Province 1 National ECW Representative, are all open for election. We will be looking to fill these positions, but no one is in the wings.

Province 1 ECW is treading water at best. Since the National ECW provides structure and guidance to Province and diocesan ECW's we would like the National ECW to consider intentionally assisting with the future of this organization.

The Province 1 ECW executive committee asked for these ideas to be brought to the NECW Board.

1. For the 2024 Triennial Meeting the NECW Board to hire a facilitator (preferably one who is not associated with ECW and has experience with non-profits/church groups) to lead a Triennial Meeting workshop(s). They should be provided with the ECW history.
 - a. All Province ECW leadership must attend (is signed up for) the workshop led by the facilitator whose main purpose is to gather information to begin a three-year discussion/discernment process: who are we (Elevator speech); where are we now; what are the needs of women today; how do we change/reinvigorate?
 - b. One or more follow up meetings of this group during Triennial Meeting.
 - c. Maybe consider other small group opportunities for delegates, diocesan presidents, and other women to meet and exchange ideas and thoughts with the facilitator.
 - d. Follow up with zoom meetings over 3 years.
2. Over the 3 years, work on the discernment to identify mission goals, challenges, and needed conversations. This would be an open and transparent discernment where people are comfortable contributing ideas, and thinking out of the box.
3. Report given at 2027 triennial with action plans to reach out to Provinces and diocese.

There will be a different format than usual at this Triennial and it may not be possible to do some of the things suggested. But the committee in charge will review the Province 1 suggestions.

Margaret Noel

Province 1 ECW Representative