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So - You Want to Start an ECW!

We are pleased, as your ECW National Board, to offer this packet to you as a tool to help you develop a plan to form a new ECW group or to revitalize your present one.

There are as many different ways to organize as there are groups, and each group should choose a workable plan that meets their individual circumstances and needs. We have included a brief summary of the history and structure of the national organization to give you an appreciation of the impact and influence that Episcopal Church Women have had and continue to have on the life and ministry of the Church. Also included in the packet are tips and suggestions on how to begin as well as some ideas for structuring and implementing a program for your group.

This is intended to be only a sampling - a guide and resource reference to 'jump start' your plans. Many Episcopal Church Women are eager to assist and advise you as you develop your group's plan. We encourage you to call your Diocesan ECW President or your Provincial Coordinator. National Board members also stand ready to help in any way we can. You will find contact and other helpful information about Episcopal Church Women on our website, www.episcopalchurch.org/ecw.

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We gratefully acknowledge former National Board member Janet R. Farmer for her work in preparing and producing this packet.



A VISION FOR EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Our vision for all women of the Episcopal Church
is that we become a vibrant blend of all ages,
coming together as a peacemaking, healing part of the church.
We aspire to be a God spark* - shining and sharing the love of Christ.

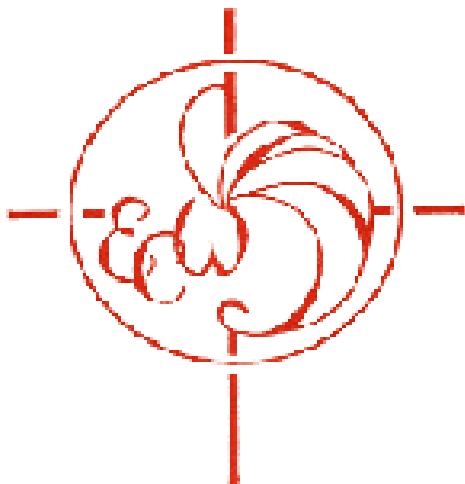
* The core self, the part of us made in God's image, spirit and soul.

This Vision Statement was developed by the 2003-2006 National Episcopal Church Women Board as part of a discussion about their future. The role of women in the Church and the world continues to change and that impacts the heart and soul of Episcopal Church Women. The Board recognized that the focus and activities would have to change to adjust to those changes.

Verna Dozier, theologian and Biblical scholar, said, "Don't tell me what you believe; tell me what difference it makes that you believe." The National Board of Episcopal Church Women recognized the importance of this statement and has consequently called every Episcopal woman into action to make a difference. This is something women do effectively as individuals, but think of the difference that we can make when we come together to do so. What are the women in your congregation doing to make a difference? Think of the lives that can be touched in fellowship, with spiritual growth and through outreach. Are these opportunities being offered in an organized and consistent way in your church?

Jesus understood the importance of being in community and combining the spiritual gifts given to each of us through the Holy Spirit. We are the Body, working together. Working together we will make a difference. A Call to Action, or more simply a plan for activities, should be developed around the local focus and passion. The National Board has developed a Call to Action focused on Literacy, Non-Violence, Leadership Development and Interfaith Education as indicated in the enclosed Call to Action brochure which may or may not meet your needs. The idea is that if the number of focus areas were minimized, nationally we would be maximizing the difference we were making. In the same way, the women of your congregation can maximize the difference they are making by coming together to be a "God spark" as envisioned by the National Board.

God, make a fresh start in me. Shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.
Psalm 51:10 The Message



HISTORY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

From the *Spirit of Missions*, Volume XXXVII for 1872:

It is our desire as speedily as possible to find together the various parochial Missionary Societies already existing, to organize new ones wherever they may be desired by every means within our power to awaken deeper and more permanent interest to each one in the Missionary work among the women of the Church.

We long to have each one feel she, individually, has something to do for Christ and for the coming of his Kingdom, not alone or as a member of a single parish but one of that great company wherein in their own special station, wait and watch and labor for their Lord.

We do not seek to control or direct the labor of the Society or the offering of the individual, she designates.

We seek to quicken the missionary spirit, and urge it to prompt and generous action. We offer you gifts of time, strength, intellect for our, your Master. There are hundreds more earnest, faithful, devoted women who would be cheered if only they knew what is being done by their sisters in the church and see their offering, small and insignificant as it seems, increased and multiplied by the union with the gifts of others.

We wish all to draw closer to each other, labor more unitedly, give more nobly, pray more fervently, follow Christ's example.

We shall be glad to hear not only from Rectors of parishes but any and all earnest Christian women who seek further information and direction with regard to it.

-OVER-

At the 30th General Convention, held in Baltimore in 1871, the Board of Missions was authorized to organize a Women's Society. The Emery sisters, Mary Abbott, Julia Chester, Susan Lavinia, and Margaret Theresa, were instrumental in the early organization of the Women's Auxiliary. Mary wrote to every rector asking for cooperation in appointing a correspondent from that parish to help organize an Auxiliary Missionary Society, or form a relationship with a society already active in that parish. Thus began a continuing communication link to encourage, inform, recruit, and guide.

The first Triennial Meeting was held in 1874 at the same time and place as the 31st General Convention. 66 women from 5 states gathered. By the second Triennial Meeting in 1877, 48 dioceses had formally organized groups. Much of the early work of the Women's Auxiliary was to address the problem of funding women who dedicated their lives to mission work. (Thus our reputation as fundraisers goes back to our beginnings!) From the beginning collections were taken up which led to the formation of the United Thank Offering. This effort, as well as the number of participants, grew at each Triennial Meeting. In preparation for the 1898 Triennial Meeting, 25,000 collection boxes were sent out which gathered in \$82,818.56. The increasing number of participants, almost 2000, prompted a change in 1907 in which only the officers of diocesan organizations could attend the Triennial Meeting in order to seat everyone and have manageable groups in small mission studies.

The Triennial Meeting in 1922 reflected the new concept in program and organization. A National Board had been formed to oversee the direction of the work of the women, in not only supporting missionaries, but in social service, religious education, and prayer and worship.

Prior to the 1958 Triennial Meeting, the Women's Auxiliary Executive Board became the General Division of Women's Work. The Triennial Meeting adopted the necessary bylaws which included a designation that diocesan groups would be known as Episcopal Church Women and parish groups would be known as the Women of _____. Between 1958 and 1985, the role of women in the Church went through numerous and significant changes. As women were accepted into seminaries and ordained, elected to vestries and as deputies to General Convention, and otherwise mainstreamed, the Episcopal Church Women struggled with their position in the Church. Over time, the national structure changed from being a part of the National Church structure to an independent group culminating in the creation of the National Board of the Episcopal Church Women in 1985. This Board, with minor changes, continues to function.

HELPFUL TIDBITS

STRUCTURE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN:

The Episcopal Church Women as an organization functions at four levels: National, Province, Diocese, and Parish.

National: The National Board, which meets three times per year, is comprised of the President, Vice-President of Program, Vice-President for Information, Secretary, Treasurer, Member-at Large for Social Justice, Member-at Large for Multi-Media, and one Representative from each of the nine provinces. The National Board does not exercise authority or control over provincial, diocesan, or parish ECW groups, but acts as the organizational entity which binds together the women of the church. Communication between the board members and women at all levels throughout the church helps the National Board to fulfill their stated mission – to support all women in their ministry. Specifically, the board plans the Triennial Meeting, oversees programs such as Women of Vision and Women to Women. In the 2000-2003 triennium, a *Call to Action* was issued focusing on Literacy, Leadership Training, Non-Violence and Interfaith Education. This Call to Action is continued and supported by the National Board.

Province: The Episcopal Church is comprised of 9 Provinces (see enclosed map). Although they may function differently, each Province has a President and an ECW Board.

Diocese: The Episcopal Church is comprised of 111 Dioceses. Almost all of them have an ECW or a Women's Ministries Board. Again, each is unique in its structure and function.

Parish: The number of parishes in the dioceses ranges from 28 to almost 200. Most parishes have active Episcopal Church Women or Women's Ministries groups.

WHY WOMEN ONLY:

Since you have, by obtaining this packet, expressed an interest in organizing or revitalizing women's activities in your parish, you probably understand "Why Women Only." But as women have become integrally involved in the life and work of the Church, the need for a women's group is not as readily apparent. An important 'why': women simply enjoy getting together with other women – whether it is for fellowship, Bible study, or working on a project. Another important aspect is the opportunity for women to grow into the life of the Church through women's ministries. Many of the women in leadership roles in the larger body of the Church began their involvement/ministry with the Episcopal Church Women.

Episcopal Church Women groups most importantly offer an environment for spiritual growth and opportunities for ministry. Participation in these groups also promotes an understanding of the structure and functionality of the Church.

WHY EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN:

When considering the establishment of an Episcopal Church Women group, knowing our history and understanding our structure is critical. From our beginning as Women's Auxiliary, and following through many changes in purpose and activities, the Episcopal Church Women have played a significant role in the work of the Episcopal Church. Cherished memories of the contributions of resources - ranging from financial to missionary to training to spirituality - which women have made throughout our history, are a source of satisfaction and pride for all of us.

-OVER-

The old stereotype of Episcopal Church Women as ‘cooks’ and ‘fundraisers’ is fading as we move into the future with new ideas, relevant programs, and unlimited opportunities for spiritual growth and service. Support is available to you through Episcopal Church Women in your local parish, convocation or deanery, diocese, province, and nationally.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RECTOR/VICAR:

This is a very key element. It is very important to have the support of the Rector/Vicar. Schedule a meeting of the key women in the congregation with him/her. Tell him/her that you are interested in organizing the women’s ministries of the church. One method of doing so is by forming an Episcopal Church Women group. Explain that you would like to have a meeting of all the women of the church to discuss plans. Include an invitation to attend that gathering. Emphasize that you understand that activities should supplement the existing mission and ministry of the congregation.

FINANCES:

This should be discussed with the rector/vicar. Some Episcopal Church Women groups maintain their own accounts, and others are supported through a line item in the parish budget. Some also function event to event by requesting contributions to participate. The size of your group and the level of activities will impact any decisions on funding.

FIRST MEETING:

In consultation with the rector/vicar, select a date for gathering the women of your congregation to talk about the formation of an Episcopal Church Women group. The date and time should be when the greatest number of women can participate. We recommend that you ask someone from outside of your congregation to facilitate this session. There are women serving on the diocesan, provincial, and national boards who can help. This creates an atmosphere of importance and openness. Promoting the gathering is critical. Use all methods of communication available such as Sunday bulletins, monthly newsletters, announcements, posters, special mailings, phone calls, and face to face invitations. In planning the agenda, include time for prayer, fellowship, ice-breakers, personal reflection, group discussion, and next step decisions. Make sure to provide child care.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

We have included several items to assist in the development of your Episcopal Church Women group including some general information regarding women’s groups and activities, generational materials that provide insight into planning, and several ideas for determining a plan for your group. There are also brochures describing the work of the National Board of Episcopal Church Women.

SAMPLE BYLAWS

This is just an example of bylaws. Parts can be added or deleted as necessary for your particular ECW.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Women of _____ Episcopal Church, City, State.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization is to relate the entire woman hood of the parish to the whole goal of the Church through a program of worship, study, service, gifts and fellowship to the end that each woman may find her place in the parish family and the mission of the church. This includes cooperation with the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of _____ and the Episcopal Church USA.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this organization shall consist of all women of _____ Episcopal Church and other women who are interested in the purpose of this organization.

ARTICLE IV: OBLIGATION (*This is done by the particular church whose bylaws we used to develop this sample. This is purely optional, but could provide startup funding and a tangible expression of commitment to the goals and future of the organization.*)

A yearly contribution of _____ (ex. \$10) shall be encouraged to insure that financial obligations may be met and that the on-going work of The Women of _____ Episcopal Church may continue. This amount shall be collected in _____ (first month) of every year.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

Section 1: Personnel and Term

The officers shall consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. They shall be elected at the _____ (ex. fall) general meeting of the Women of _____ Episcopal Church. The term of officers shall be from _____ to _____ (same month).

Section 2: Duties

A. President: She shall preside at all meetings of The Women of _____ Episcopal Church, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee. She shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, fill vacancies occurring in offices and appoint the committee chairpersons. She shall perform all duties pertinent to the office of President.

B. Vice-President: She shall preside in the absence of the President. She shall serve as liaison for all groups and shall automatically assume the office of President the following year. She shall be responsible for planning of the programs for the general meetings.

C. Secretary: She shall keep the minutes of all meetings of The Women of _____ Episcopal Church. She shall conduct all general correspondence.

D. Treasurer: She shall receive and disburse all monies as she may be directed by the organization. She shall collect all membership contributions and shall give an accurate financial report when requested by the President. She shall accept budget requests and present a budget to the board no later than _____ (first month of the year). She shall obtain Executive Committee approval for any unbudgeted and unauthorized expenditure which arises between meetings of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: Personnel and Term

The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers, Committee Chairpersons, representatives from all women's organizations in the church, and the Lay Ministry Coordinator. They shall be elected for a term of one year, with the exception of the Treasurer who shall be elected for a two year term.

Section 2: Committee Chairpersons

Any fundraiser, newsletter, permanent activity chairs.

Section 3. Organizations

1. Altar Guild
2. Daughters of the King
3. United Thank Offering
4. Church Periodical Club
5. Any women's bible study group.

ARTICLE VII: NOMINATING

The Nominating Committee shall consist of a chairman and two board members appointed by the Vice-President. They shall present a slate of officers to be elected at the _____ (last one of the year) general meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

There shall be a minimum of six (6) board meetings per year. There shall be a minimum of two (2) general meetings per year. The date, time, and place shall be designated by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX: QUORUM

A quorum of the Board of Directors shall consist of one-third (1/3) of the members of the board. A quorum at a general meeting shall consist of the members present at the meeting.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

The bylaws may be amended by any general meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present provided that the proposed amendments have been approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

What's Happening to ECWs? Generational Values Impacting Our Organizations

"The nature of organized women's ministries has changed, but the need for Christian women to be together in community will never go away."
Mary MacGregor, Women's Ministry Consultant

What are women doing today in churches that are addressing their needs to be in community? Organizational models, activities, fellowship opportunities, and outreach efforts are being profoundly affected by the values of living generations.

Silent and Builder Generations – Women born before 1945

The oldest generations of living women. They are most comfortable with activities that are closely associated as being "women's" work.

Organizational models – traditional, hierarchical models. Boards of directors, appointments of persons to get the tasks done, decisions made in democratic fashion. Parliamentary procedure often followed. Terms of office often not enforced.

"Volunteers" recruited to "work." They hang in through good times and bad. They are very loyal to the group and often exclusive without realizing it. "Been there, done that" attitude among many, yet long to not have their organization fold.

Fundraising – And lots of it! The type that often appeal to women of this generation: bazaars, craft shows, thrift shops, antique shows, luncheons, dinners, bake sales, food sales. Funds raised usually to support the needs of the church rather than outreach.

Programs – Done on a small scale. Speakers from the community address a number of topics, from human needs to civic concerns. Spiritual emphasis also done: teaching, Bible study, ordained persons speaking on a variety of topics.

Fellowship – Some traditional guild groups, Bible study groups, handwork groups, groups that meet to create items for fundraising.

Outreach – Lots of signing checks (tied to fundraising). Learning about outreach efforts visiting outreach centers to raise awareness is important. Food pantry and thrift shop work are important efforts.

Baby Boomer Generation – Women born between 1945 and 1964

This "bridge" generation of women still enjoy doing some of the activities that their mothers enjoyed, but this generation has more women working outside the home, more demands made of their time, and are much more selective about how they spend their time. They are more focused on activities, programs, etc. that will meet their needs. Do not meet out of obligation or guilt.

Organizational models – Board of directors still okay, but they must have clearly defined job descriptions and terms for job commitment. This is a generation that doesn't have time to waste and has no patience with poor leadership. This group would prefer to do specific tasks in the context of a team with goals and ending points. This generation has a strong desire for women to work together efficiently, and they will be more outspoken when women don't and will not feel as obligated as their older sisters in Christ to hang in their in a tough situation. This generation is less willing to take on large, time consuming tasks.

Fundraising – This generation is still interested in doing some fundraising, but not as their older sisters in Christ. Their fundraisers are often simple without much up-front planning. Examples: garage sales, no-bake sales, phantom auction, broad annual appeal.

Programs – High quality is a standard. Excellent speakers and inspirational presentations desired. This generation would rather go to an occasional program that is exceptionally well done than more frequent activities that are not well planned. Self-development, Women of Vision types of programs are attractive. “Less done well is better” is a motto.
Fellowship – This generation wants to meet together more for prayer and study than their older sisters in Christ. Support groups of women of similar ages and needs are important. Doing things occasionally just to have fun is important because of their need to “escape.” Retreats and Quiet Days that are very well done are attractive to them.

Outreach – This generation is a more “hands on” group of women. They want to participate in outreach activities (thrift shop, Habitat for Humanity, etc.), but with very short terms of time commitment. This is a generation that is more likely to get involved in prison or street ministry, and other activities that older women didn’t consider appropriate for women’s involvement.

Baby Buster or Generation X Generations – Women born between 1965 and 1978

The youngest generation of adult women who may be interested in church activities designed for women. Many do not want gender division. Very age, stage of life sensitive.

Organizational models – Boards of directors not preferred. They would rather have short term committees, ad hoc groups, team leadership tasks with well defined job descriptions and short terms of commitments. They will tell you that they don’t want to attend board meetings.

Fundraising – Most not interested because of time commitments. They would rather write a check than have to do work.

Programs – Only want to participate occasionally. Want outstanding speakers that can address personal and spiritual development. Not as much interest in learning about topics of civic and human needs concerns as the older generations.

Fellowship – Bible study, prayer and support groups, common interest groups, retreats, Quiet Days, get-away fun activities are preferred.

Outreach – Want to do “hands on” short term work more than contribute money. Short term mission work is very attractive to this group.

Millennial Generation – Women born after 1978

MUST be personally invited to participate. They need to feel loved, accepted, respected for their opinion. They want to be heard, not talked at or told what to do. They need to understand the purpose of an ECW and why it would benefit them to participate. They are willing to help if asked! They want to know that their involvement will be important and make a difference. They want to have other young women their ages participating also. They like to be in on the planning and have some responsibility, but they don’t want to attend meetings to do so. Being accountable through phone calls and email is sufficient for them. The EXPECTATION is that the ECW will be involved in spiritual activities and that women will model Christ like behavior. Research has shown that if they believe in the cause of the group they make excellent volunteers. But they are waiting to be asked!

ECW'S THAT WANT TO MOVE INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM WITH HEALTH AND VITALITY NEED TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1. Stop and look at what you are doing as an ECW organization. Are you addressing the felt needs of women in your church: What are these needs? Are you doing things the same way you did ten years ago? In the face of rapid changes you can not stand still. You must adapt to changing needs, be flexible, be creative and give yourselves permission to do it differently.
2. ECW leadership must periodically go into retreat to pray together for guidance, reflect on the current scenario, evaluate and plan.
3. Remember that not all ECWs should look alike. The days of handbooks with a single model for ECWs are over. Each group should reflect the needs of the location.
4. Strong ECWs are not duplicating activities that are currently being provided at their churches. They address needs not being offered. They talk to women they would like to attract and listen...really listen.
5. Healthy ECWs understand the purpose of their organizations. They often have written mission statements expressing this purpose, and organize and evaluate everything they do around these statements. They are closely in tune with the mission and vision of their particular church.
6. Smart ECWs work closely with their clergy. They express the desire to be a part of the clergy's/vestry's vision for the church. They are mutually supportive and are vocal about that support.
7. ECWs with vitality have a team leadership approach. These teams work together and support each other. They assist one another in weak areas and encourage ministry well done and celebrate successes. They work together as Sisters in Christ to love each other, rise above pettiness, hostile criticism, and backbiting.
8. Productive ECWs have well defined ministries. Persons are given written job descriptions and know the time limits to their commitments. They are given opportunities to repeat the job if they desire, or bow out at the appropriate commitment end.
9. ECWs enjoying success do not mix business with pleasure. Business meetings are held independent of programs, retreats, etc., but are open to all interested persons.
10. ECW business meetings are organized and well run, but sensitive to the persons participating. Significant prayer and devotional time are built into the meetings. If possible, intercessory prayers and sharing time is included at the end of the meeting.
11. Creative, well-planned retreats and quiet days are central to the activities of healthy

groups. In addition, activities that focus on building community among the women are critical. Small groups of women who meet regularly for study, prayer, and fellowship are key to larger groups addressing the spiritual needs of women.

12. Outreach ministry beyond the walls of the church is extremely important to successful groups.

13. Strong groups do not let "Martha" type activities and fundraising dominate their agendas.

14. Communication is key. The most effective ways to communicate information are:

1. face to face
2. telephone
3. announcements
4. mail-postcards (not in envelopes) or flyers easily opened
5. signs and posters

Remember:

Women gather today for inspiration, education, fellowship, fun and opportunities to escape a frantic lifestyle. Women under 50 will only spend their precious free time on activities that address their needs. Older women need to be willing to experience the difficulty of change if they truly want it.

Our uniqueness is grounded in being Christian women in community with each other.

A quick evaluation measure - How does your ECW measure up? The time, talent and treasure of a healthy ECW organization will fall into these categories:

1/3 inreach activities, 1/3 outreach activities, 1/3 spiritual growth activities.

Inreach - Martha activities that benefit the church, including fundraising that is spent on the church.

Outreach - Anything given outside the walls of the church including time and fundraising.

Spiritual Growth - Worship, religious education, sharing, intimate fellowship, quiet days, retreats.

RECRUITMENT!!!!

The most important thing to remember about getting women involved is to ask them face to face, friend to friend, or through acquaintances. The “climate” of the ECW or Women’s Ministries group must be inviting, always welcoming of newcomers, and loving as a community of Christian women. Positive energy and a “can do” spirit helps assure success.

Who to ask –

Think about women who need a new focus, have recently retired, are in a new life stage, or have made a recent move into the church and need to connect, make friends, and find a significant ministry. Seek assistance from clergy, lay coordinators, other staff, or parishioners who know lots of members.

How to recruit –

Talk about how you have benefited from participating in ECW or women’s ministry and how you see this as a vital part of the mission of your church. If they appear interested, have another person they may know or know-of call to discuss the benefits of participating.

Provide any written/other information concerning ECW at all levels – local, diocesan, provincial, national. Share the website addresses. Provide ministry (job) descriptions with time commitments.

Give them time to make a decision. Don’t pressure them for an immediate answer. Coercion is not a loving thing to do!

Recognize potential persons.

Engage them in discussion face to face.

Communicate the facts about the organization.

Review the benefits you have experienced by participating in ECW.

Understand their situation, time availability, abilities/skills, and see where the best fit may be.

Invite them into the life of ECW by helping them connect with others and feel comfortable.

Thank them for joining with others to help achieve the mission of the ECW.

PROMOTIONAL QUIPS FOR BULLETINS AND NEWSLETTERS

Helen Keller said, "When we do the best we can, we never know what miracles await." Be a part of the miracle awaiting ECW on *date*.

Grandma Moses said, "Life is what we make of it; always has been, always will be." We need you to help make a life for ECW on *date*.

Golda Meir said, "Nothing in life just happens. You have to have the stamina to meet the obstacles and overcome them." ECW needs you to make it happen on *date*.

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Come dream of a future for ECW on *date*.

Pearl Buck said, "The mind must be free for limitless imagination." What can you imagine the ECW doing on *date*.

Harriet Beecher Stowe said, "Where people are determined to be anything, they will be." Help determine what ECW will be on *date*.

Teresa of Avila said, "Strength has a way of simplifying things which seem impossible." Bring your strengths to help ECW simplify things on *date*.

Marie Currie said, "I was taught that the way of progress is neither swift nor easy." How will ECW progress on *date*?

Margaret Fuller said, "Harmony exists in difference no less than in likeness." What different activities will create harmony for ECW on *date*?

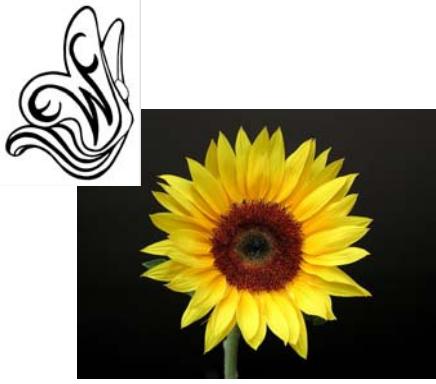
Pearl Buck said, "Our real weakness is not to acknowledge the extent of our power." Extend the power of ECW on *date*.

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "You must do the thing that you think you cannot do." What do you think ECW cannot do that it must on *date*?

Louisa May Alcott said, "Helping one another is part of our religion." Help create your part in ECW on *date*.

Marguerite of Navarre said, "Love works wonders." What wonders can ECW accomplish through love on *date*?

Harriet Beecher Stowe said, "Let us never doubt everything that ought to happen is going to happen." What do you think should happen to ECW on *date*?



The ECW "Calendar, Girls"

Diocese of Texas Annual Meeting Workshop

"Sizzling" New Ideas

The 2003 movie, "Calendar Girls" shows the age-old stuffiness of the Women's Institute of Yorkshire, England as a few of their group of "freer" spirits produce a different (and successful) fundraiser for an outreach concern.

Four main concepts of the movie are good to remember for our "Women's Institute", known as the Episcopal Church Women.

CREATIVITY

FOCUS ON OUR PURPOSE (Outreach)

WORKING TOGETHER (Fellowship)

TRUE MEANING OF ACTIONS (Spiritual Growth)

These concepts reflect the Purpose of the Episcopal Church Women ... "to empower each other to live the life for which Christ called us by sharing His love through outreach, fellowship and spiritual growth."

CREATIVITY: Consider ideas and concepts that are going to peak an interest – How do we communicate our ideas, intrigue people, or get their attention. Think about "Bad Women of the Bible", "Passionate Moves", or "the Calendar, Girls". What is each of these about?

Bad Women of the Bible - a play performed by women of your parish about famous women of the bible. The script can be funny and involving many different women.

Passionate Moves – an introduction to Compassion Ministries, giving opportunities for signing up

The Calendar, Girls – we got you here, didn't we? This could be a beginning of the year theme for a meeting, laying out key events that will be held in your home area. Please include Convocational and Diocesan events, too.

FOCUS ON OUR PURPOSE: No matter what the thoughts, go to God in prayer; ask Him what His will is. Outreach is led by something touching our hearts. Look around – what is needed to help those in your area. Would any of these interest your group?

Children's School Supplies Boxes (needed all year round), buying and reading books for a local school or child care facility



Bassinettes for new underprivileged mothers in local hospitals, baskets of goodies for visiting church members or people deployed in the military

Babysitting one or two hours for young mothers to meet for coffee and study

Playing games with those in nursing homes, working with Meals on Wheels

Actions led by God, no matter the size, are treasures to behold.

WORKING TOGETHER: Through fellowship we are each blessed; with God our time together gives us a glimpse of His strength, laughter, and joy to be in relationship with us. How do we spend that time?

Cook a lunch menu together to sell as take out to the working community or school teachers. Make it a simple menu of salad, soup and bread

Start a **small gift shop** with specialty items – be creative and unique in your approach, it can be open a few days a week or just on Sundays. It could also be a series of items printed with the same logo that can be taken to different meetings and sold (i.e. butterfly collection)

Road Trips to an antique store, historic churches, shopping, museums, even touring your own church with the meanings of windows or historical information

Special Events like wine tastings, fun runs for charity, and of course luncheons and bazaars

TRUE MEANING OF OUR ACTIONS: In all we do, understanding God's will for us is the premier focus. Enriching our lives through prayer and study is always a good idea. Nourishing ourselves gives us a chance to be fed and hear God speaking to us.

Quiet Day (or non-quiet day) held at a ranch or in the country away from the normal environment. Speakers can be from your own parish or by a diocesan contact. Many of the board members are free and willing speakers about a variety of topics, or your coordinators can suggest speakers.

Bible/Book Study is a way to make a "meeting" purposeful and meaningful. Choose a short simple book and discuss a chapter a meeting. Keep the meetings short and weekly, twice a month, or even monthly

Personal needs are something that God also calls us to care for like presentations by specialized attorneys for wills, "Women and Fitness" topics, or even agricultural/horticultural specialists

Faith Journeys by learning to make a prayer shawl; or walking a labyrinth; or praying with the Anglican Rosary

As the movie "The Calendar Girls" states "A group of ordinary women changed the world one month at a time".

May God Bless you and Guide you, in all your works.



A FOCUS GROUP EVENT

When your church is ready to revision, revamp, recreate or start an organized women's group, it is best to have an event which will uncover the needs of the women of your church.

The current leaders, or where there is no group, a committed core of 4-6 women should do the following:

- Personally invite, face to face and/or by phone, the women of your church to a Focus Group Event. Make sure to convey the purpose of the meeting which is to get their honest input in order to recreate, redesign or start an organized women's ministries group.
- Plan a meeting at a time convenient for most women that includes some time for fellowship and refreshments.
- Invite someone who is not a member of your church to facilitate the meeting. You might contact someone from the diocesan or provincial organization or a neighboring church. You want someone who does not have a vested interest in the outcome of the gathering.
- Have everyone gather as a whole group and again, explain the purpose of the meeting. Open with a short icebreaker activity. Have the rector/vicar present to express support for this effort and to welcome everyone. Use one of the many processes to begin an outline for the future.
- Before leaving the session, make sure that there is a group to take the results, publish them, and work toward implementation.

Ouch! That Hurts!

These events can result in painful truth being revealed. You must be ready to hear it. Despite efforts to create a caring community of women, some women will say they don't feel welcomed or that women's work is irrelevant to their needs or not worth their precious time. If it is obvious that women's ministries are not going well at your church, it is very important to find out why. It is better to have information, even if it hurts, than not to have it.

As a Leader of Women's Ministries...

It is important to remember that your goal is to serve, not be served. Christ will honor your efforts, especially if you are open to your Sisters in Christ and willing to make changes that are necessary to build a stronger community of women in your congregation. Pray and work with others as a team who feel called to this ministry. Work hard, pray for guidance, and trust that God will use you in special ways, sometimes beyond your understanding.

ECW PLANNING – HANDOUT #1

Directions: Gather in small groups of three persons. Take a few minutes in quiet reflection to consider the questions below. Allow each person in the group 5-7 minutes to share her responses to the questions with the other persons in the group. The object of this exercise is to get to know each other as Sisters in Christ. Sharing from the heart asks merely for acceptance. Love each other by thoughtfully listening without giving advice or responding with your similar story.

Time allotted: 25 minutes

Tell the group some highlights from your life journey – where you were born, grew up, schooling, employed positions, current family situation.

What brought you to this church? What have you found in this congregation that brings you joy? How has being a member of this congregation challenged you?

Share with the group an event, moment, or period of your life when you realized a deepening of your faith and spiritual formation.

Do you have an awareness of a spiritual gift that God has given you, and if so, what is it?

ECW PLANNING – HANDOUT #2

Directions: Jot down some responses to the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. They are valid because they are born out of your own experience. You will be sharing your answers with the whole group.

Time allotted: Personal reflection – 10 minutes
Group sharing – 20 minutes

1. List 5 words or phrases that reflect your image of Episcopal Church Women .
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
2. What was it about ECW that would draw you in to participate?
3. Describe what you need the ECW at this church to be for you.

ECW PLANNING – HANDOUT #3

Directions: Answer Part 1 by yourself. Part 2 – Share your answers with each other. In Part 3, work together to come to consensus.

Part 1 – 5 minutes

What do you think are the three greatest needs of the women of our church that can be addressed through the work of the ECW? (Keep in mind the other activities going on in the parish. Duplication of activities may create less participation. Think in terms of addressing the needs of women that are not being met.)

1.

2.

3.

Part 2 – 5 minutes

Every member of your group needs to share her answers to Part 1. Jot down some notes on the back of this sheet of each other's responses.

Part 3 – 15 minutes

As a group, come to consensus on the three greatest needs of the women of your church that can be addressed through activities of the ECW in the coming year. These will be reported back to the whole group.

1.

2.

3.

XXX EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ECW MEETING/WORKSHOP
DATE
ECW INTEREST SURVEY

Listed below are some of the many types of activities in which ECWs participate. Read all of the activities in a category and then number them in the order of your interest in participating in that type of activity with 1 being of the most interest.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

1. _____ Small group Bible study that meets regularly.
2. _____ Small group spiritual/personal growth study with various study materials that meets regularly.
3. _____ Prayer vigils held for specific purposes.
4. _____ Quiet Days - often led by outside speakers, lasting 3 to 7 hours (sometimes quiet required, sometimes not!) for spiritual growth and meditation.
5. _____ Spiritual Growth Retreat - going away to an overnight location and being led by an outside speaker with emphasis on prayer, worship, spiritual growth.
6. _____ Personal/Self Discovery Retreat - going away to an overnight location and being led by a trained team of outside speakers with emphasis on personal growth and self discovery (example: Women of Vision)
7. _____ Other kinds of retreats - going away to an overnight location, often with an outside speaker coming to lead part of it, with emphasis on a variety of activities, some fun, some just restful, some crafty-creative, etc.
8. _____ Field trips - to short destinations to visit historic churches, churches of other faiths, to see Christian drama presentations, to hear speakers at other places.
9. _____ Host at XXX - visiting speakers with emphasis on: (check if interested)
_____ personal growth
_____ personal/self discovery
_____ outreach ministries in the world
_____ dramatic Biblical/Christian presentations
_____ other _____

OUTREACH: (ministries we do outside the walls of XXX)

1. _____ Be a part of a group of women who commit a full day or two to a task helping some cause in the community like Habitat for Humanity, re-paint a local food shelter, clean up an elderly women's home, etc.
2. _____ Be a part of a group of women who commit regularly scheduled time to help some cause in the community like a women's shelter, food pantry, etc.
3. _____ Do a single fund raiser that requires minimum planning and preparation and give the funds raised to an outreach concern. (example: dinner, bake sale, garage sale, etc.)
4. _____ Do a fund raiser that requires significant planning, preparation and commitment of time and give the funds to an outreach concern. (example: bazaar, thrift shop, gift shop, etc.)
5. _____ Be a part of an ECW event that focuses on an outreach concern and in some way gives aid to that concern. (example: baby shower for a pre-natal clinic, toy shower for children's home, gathering clothes for the poor, etc.)
6. _____ Have an ongoing craft project that benefits an outside agency. (example: make rape crisis kits for local hospitals, making lap quilts for Ronald McDonald House, making emergency toiletry bags for women's shelter, etc.)
7. _____ Your idea: _____

INREACH:

1. _____ Have a one time event fundraiser to purchase or contribute to something necessary for this congregation or building.
2. _____ Have a long term fundraising event to purchase something expensive for the church.
3. _____ Do a handwork project for this church such as hangings, banners, kneelers, etc.
4. _____ Do Chrismons for a Chrismon tree to be used at Christmas for this church.
5. _____ Participate in an organized ministry to provide meals for persons at XXX.
6. _____ Have a party just for fun and fellowship. (example: slumber party, dinner party, etc.)
7. _____ Go out of town together with no serious agenda. (example: to a B&B, go antique shopping, see the wildflowers, go to a museum, go to a play)
8. _____ Have speakers come in to do demonstrations such as cooking, flower arranging, etc.
9. _____ Host a party for the whole church, theme party, dinner party, etc.
10. _____ Your idea: _____

YOUR COMMITMENT:

Please check all applicable phrases:

I want to see a revitalized Episcopal Church Women group at XXX, and I will support it in spirit, with my prayers, and by participating as I am able to do.

I do not think we need an organized Episcopal Church Women group at XXX at this time.

I am interested in participating on a design team (4-8) which will work this year to determine the structure and function of the ECW organization and will plan the activities for next year. I am willing to make this a one year commitment.

I would consider taking on a leadership role for a single event planned by this group next year.

I am not able to be a leader, but I make a good "Indian." Please call on me to help with individual tasks.

I am willing to make a limited number of telephone calls.

I want to help in the following way: (your description) _____

Your name: _____

Telephone: _____

Thank you.

XXX EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ECW MEETING/WORKSHOP AGENDA
DATE

8:45 - 9:00	Gather and Coffee
9:00 - 9:15	Opening prayer and introductions.
9:15 - 9:30	Icebreaker
9:30 - 9:45	Reflections on who Episcopal Church Women were and are.
9:45 - 10:15	Generations
10:15 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 10:40	Self-reflective assessment.
10:40 – 10:55	Small group sharing.
10:55 - 11:05	Small group reports.
11:05 - 11:20	Full group discussion.
11:20 - 11:25	Individual commitment.
11:25 - 11:55	So where do we go from here....
11:55	Closing.

ECW – EXPLORING OUR OWN NEEDS

Part 1 – Directions: Answer #1 and #2 by yourself. (7 minutes)

#1. List 3 needs you have as a woman and a Christian that you would like to see addressed through the activities of the Episcopal Church Women in your church.

1.

2.

3.

#2. In what ways, if any, is the Episcopal Church Women of your church meeting the needs you stated in #1.

Part 2. Directions: Gather with other women in groups of three and compare answers, allowing each woman 3-4 minutes to talk. Then decide one action you can do to address an individual or common group need concerning organized women's ministries and write that action down in the space below. (20 minutes.)

THE VALUES OF LIVING AMERICAN GENERATIONS

THE SILENT AND BUILDER GENERATIONS born before 1945

- LIVES WERE SHAPED BY THE GREAT DEPRESSION
- SUFFERED THROUGH WORLD WAR II
- LEARNED TO LIVE ON VERY LITTLE, AND IN SOME SITUATIONS, LIFE WAS JUST SURVIVAL
- MATERIAL THINGS WERE TRUE LUXURIES
- REALLY TALENTED AT “MAKING DO”
EVERY PENNY COUNTED, DEBT WAS TO BE AVOIDED
- MEN PROVIDED, WOMEN STAYED HOME TO RAISE CHILDREN
- WOMEN PRIMARY VOLUNTEERS IN CHURCHES
- DIVORCE WAS NOT SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE
- EXTREMELY LOYAL TO INSTITUTIONS, THE GOVERNMENT, THE CHURCH, SOCIAL CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS
- LIFE IS WORK, FAMILY GATHERINGS VERY IMPORTANT, PACE OF LIFE MODERATED, WORK AND FAMILY HIGHEST VALUES

THE BABY BOOMER GENERATION born between 1945-1964

- LARGEST GROUP IN AMERICA, 1 IN 3, 80 MILLION STRONG
- GREW UP IN FIFTIES – ALL NEW OPPORTUNITIES
- WANTED TO RE-SHAPE EVERYTHING, VERY IDEALISTIC
- VIETNAM AFFECTED TRUST IN GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTIONS
- DESIRED SOCIAL CHANGE, CIVIL RIGHTS, PERSONAL RIGHTS
- FIRST GENERATION TO SEND WOMEN TO COLLEGE
- FIRST GENERATION TO HAVE 2 INCOME HOUSEHOLDS
- WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN FOR PROFIT, CEO s
- CHURCH DENOMINATIONAL ALLEGIANC E LOST
- NO LONGER HAVE TO BE A CHURCH MEMBER TO HAVE RESPECT IN THE COMMUNITY, TO BE A GOOD PERSON
- WANT TO COMMUNE WITH GOD IN THE GARDEN, ON THE GOLF COURSE
- MORAL RULE BREAKDOWN, DO WHAT YOU WANT JUST DON’THURT SOMEONE ELSE WHILE DOING IT- SITUATIONAL ETHICS OK
- LOSS OF CARING FOR SOCIETY, LAWYERS, LAWSUITS RULE
- WORK DRIVES LIFE, SCHEDULE PLAY AND VACATION, BUSY-NESS HIGHLY VALUED, FAMILIES RULED BY SCHEDULES

GENERATION “X” born between 1964 -1978

- 41 MILLION, SMALL. THE NUMBERS WERE BUSTED
- ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL, EASE WITH TECHNOLOGY
- KNOWN AS “ENTITLED” GENERATION
- FEELING LOVED AND ACCEPTED IS HIGH PRIORITY
- 50% COME FROM BROKEN HOMES AND BLENDED FAMILIES
- EMOTIONAL PAIN HAS BEEN CENTRAL TO THEIR LIVES
- SEARCH FOR INTIMACY IS DRIVING FORCE IN THEIR LIVES
- WANT PERSONAL, RELATIONAL CONNECTEDNESS TO ORGANIZATIONS THEY COMMIT TO PARTICIPATE IN
- FEAR OF THE FUTURE DOMINATES-FAMILIES, AIDS, JOBS, ETC.
- FAMILY DEFINED AS THOSE WHO LOVE THEM- BEING A PART OF A COMMUNITY WHICH IS OPEN, SAFE, INCLUSIVE
- LIVE IN CONTRADICTION. BELIEVE IN PRO-CHOICE, BUT PRO-LIFE FOR WHALES, ANIMALS, TREES
- MOST “SPIRITUAL” GENERATION, CHRISTIANITY, NEW AGE OR CULTS?
- IF PARENTS THEY DESIRE ACADEMIC, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT TO TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THEIR KIDS YET THEY YEARN FOR MORAL BOUNDARIES
- CHURCH MUST BE WELCOMING, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, LOVING COMMUNITY TO DRAW THEM IN. CONVERSION COMES LATER
- WORK SUPPORTS PLAY, LIFESTYLE, ENTERTAINMENT

MILLENNIALS born after 1978

- 64 MILLION. FIRST POST COLD WAR GENERATION, DON’T KNOW WAR – although this has recently changed
- PARENTED BY OTHERS, LATCH KEY, DAY CARE KIDS
- LARGE ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RICH, POOR
- HIGH TECH AND CONNECTED
- ACCUSTOMED TO COMFORT, CASUAL, “AS I AM”, DESIRE IT IN CHURCH
- THE “DISILLUSIONED” GENERATION, VERY OPEN TO SPIRITUALITY
- THE “CLUSTERS” GENERATION, RELATIONSHIPS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
- ANGER AND VIOLENCE CAUSES THEM TO BE AT RISK
- HUGE GULF BETWEEN THEIR GRANDPARENTS AND THEMSELVES IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD AND VALUES
- LIFE IS PLAY, WORK IS FORCED, ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

WHAT'S IN A GENERATION?

GENERATION	% OF POPULATION	CHURCH AFFILIATION %
GI / Silent	10/13	60/50
Boomer	29	40
Gen X	27	18
Millennial	21	10

GENERATIONAL PREFERENCES IN ORGANIZATIONS

PREFERENCE	BUILDER	BOOMER	GEN X/MILLENNIAL
Organizational Model	Traditional boards Hierarchical positions	Less formal boards	Ad hoc groups, committees
Decision Making	Democratic style Voting Robert's Rule	Democratic style Consensus	Consensus
Leadership	Orderly Objective Willing to make tough choices	Solicits great deal of input Focused Delegates	Relational Assures all persons heard Flexible Desires group ownership Prefers team leadership
Meeting Style	Formal Reports Sometimes very detail oriented Often lengthy	Somewhat less formal Agenda driven Time sensitive	Causal at informal places Time sensitive Order not a high priority
Volunteers	Personal interest Sense of duty or obligation Willing to participate without job description Oldest hard to recruit because "been there done that"	Personal need Little sense of obligation Wants to know expectations Needs job description	Personal need No sense of obligation Wants to know expectations Needs job description Wants to feel something is in it for them Needs to be brought in and affirmed and made to feel a part of something significant in order to build commitment
Time commitment	Often willing to have a long term commitment	Resists long term Wants limit - often 1 year	Prefers short term - 3 months to 1 year
Expectations of group support / performance	Often low but would like to see success	Expects results Wants excellence, disappointed with less Goal oriented	Excellence expected Requires relational support Wants team effort, goals, vision for a creative future