



2024 Annual Report Summary



*Here I am
Lord
send me*

Isaiah 6:8

Ella Clark



Here I am Lord, Send Me!, the national theme for 2024–2025, was fully embraced by members. National President Shari Guinta chose the theme graphic, explaining it “shows a woman with her arms uplifted toward the dove, representing the Holy Spirit. The olive branch symbolizes the world’s struggle for peace. The woman is barefoot; she is aware that the road of social justice and service can be uncomfortable, but she is okay with that. The eagle feather represents the League’s outreach to Indigenous men and women.” Each member was called to reflect on where God was calling her to serve, and council activities truly reflected the uniqueness and diversity of how one central theme could become a groundswell of service to parishes and communities.





Subsidiary to the theme, the focus for 2024 was on mental health. Mental health issues are pervasive in society, found in homelessness, violence, spousal abuse, job loss, etc. Because it touches all levels of society, councils were able to choose which aspect of mental health resonated with them and respond accordingly. Over 65% of councils responded to the focus by arranging for guest speakers, attending workshops or retreats, gaining a better understanding of the topic, and providing information on how to get help for those suffering from mental health issues.

While councils served communities with a special emphasis on mental health, the board was future focused on governance and strategies. After hearing what members and councils had to say in the Unity Outreach, the board struck three committees to address the areas of most concern to the organization internally—communications, education and training, and priority setting.

1. Information sharing was identified as a concern by councils, both gaps in communications and, in some cases, overcommunication. A communications task force was struck to examine League-wide communications processes and methods. The resulting recommendations were adopted in August 2024. The provincial councils, represented by their presidents, agreed this was

a provincial level responsibility. They are to be the gateway between national level and all other levels, with all but urgent communications, website postings, and the magazine to flow through them in both directions, i.e., from member to national and national to member.

2. Vacancies in leadership roles and reluctance to take on leadership positions were also a concern of councils.

After study, the education and training task force determined that there was a multitude of training resources available, the fruits of the strategic plan and the previous year's reorganization. What was missing was the training opportunities. The provincial councils, represented by their presidents, agreed this was a provincial level responsibility.





3. Finally, councils expressed being overwhelmed by the requests for their time and energy from the diocesan, provincial and national levels. It was discerned that if the three levels consulted more often and coordinated their planning efforts, the stress on parish councils would be reduced accordingly. Processes were set up to ensure that all counterparts at leadership levels were choosing and working in tandem on projects of common interest.

Keeping members interested, the League's perceived image, lack of leadership, and, most especially, lack of fellowship were not considered significant challenges faced by councils across Canada. Attracting new and younger members is an age-old concern dating back to 1965–1985 when the League had reached its peak stride. With the divergence in

family values between society and the church and the increasing need for women to be in the workforce, the League has become less attractive to and representative of generations of young women. To address these challenges, a "1" Campaign was launched. During 2024, councils were given one catchphrase per month to use to promote membership in the League.

More than 90% of councils visited the national website looking for information. The most accessed information on the website was manuals, forms, supplies and the contact page. Spiritual messages from the national chairperson of faith had the greatest engagement on Facebook. Councils embraced Facebook, with 5,433 followers. The Facebook page regularly provided posts of parish council events shared by members with great pride.

Councils embraced the digital age. A full 87% of councils communicate with members by email, doing so monthly. A monthly email has become best practice for sharing League information. Almost 40% of councils also used the telephone or word of mouth to reach out to members who were not comfortable with digital communication, ensuring no one was left behind.

Parish councils made significant financial contributions to local organizations. Total contributions reported were \$2,104,035 to local organizations, \$204,440 to





national organizations and \$202,217 to international organizations. Summed up, this equated to an average of \$3,654 per council.

The League invested in the development of an online e-shop to streamline ordering for members, as well as the development of an updated membership system, the latter of which would be launched in 2025. No investments were made in physical fixtures.

A committee was struck to rewrite the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*. The committee began the study in 2024, examining each section and offering improvements to the board at virtual meetings. The board discussed and decided upon each recommendation before the committee studied the next section. The complete revision was planned for release in October 2025.

One policy change that became effective immediately was the change to election procedures for councils at all levels. A requirement for candidates to submit a pastoral letter of good standing to their respective nominations and elections committee was added. The board believed that leaders in good standing were important to the reputation of the League and that members' standing should never be the basis for rumours or discussion among members who might question the status of a sister member. It further believed the most sensitive and confidential means to gaining that assurance would be to involve a woman's pastor or a member of the clergy who may or may not know her. The change in procedure came into effect in September 2024.





Representing Catholic Women

The League was represented by National Chairperson of Social Justice Glenda Carson at the International Symposium on Palliative Care organized by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Pontifical Academy for Life. The event was held in Ottawa in May 2024.

Honorary Life Member Barbara Dowding represented the League at the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations at its board meeting in Rome, Italy in June 2024 and again at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, USA, also in June 2024.

Faith Standing Committee

"The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith..." Members were encouraged to:

- Pray, individually and communally
- Uphold the sanctity of life
- Study Catholic teachings
- Stress the importance of the role of women in the church
- Foster vocations
- Advance ecumenism and interfaith endeavours

The national level faithfully and diligently ensured members were given opportunities to pray individually and communally by regularly posting prayers on the website and on social media channels. These offerings became the most frequently liked and shared messages of the national level. A Novena for Members was published in the winter 2025 edition of *The Canadian League*, and four national spiritual webinars were organized for members and other interested individuals.

Lectio divina was promoted as a profound way to hear God's voice. Councils encouraged members to accompany those with mental health challenges and promoted many spiritual programs, as well as significant liturgical dates and events. Approximately one in five councils participated in the "A Great Symphony of Prayer" eight-part webinar offered by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and one in 12 promoted participation in the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations' "Conversation in the Spirit" webinar.





Service Standing Committee

“The Catholic Women’s League of Canada calls its members... to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.” Members were encouraged to:

- Promote activities in service to members, the parish and community
- Advocate for and support services that include but are not limited to homelessness, human trafficking, poverty, bullying and racism
- Educate members about charitable needs, especially mission assistance at home and abroad

National Catholic Healthcare Week was promoted, awareness was raised about plastic pollution and members’ responsibility to reduce their plastics use, and the “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” toolkit was redesigned. Also promoted was the Partners for Life CWL partnership with Canadian Blood Services, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, Development and Peace—Caritas Canada, and the importance of literacy.

Councils raised awareness about bullying, racism, human trafficking and homelessness by modelling appropriate behaviour, involving volunteers, ensuring donations (food, clothes) to shelters helping the unhoused, assisting unhoused individuals in the inner city, including collecting clothing and supplies and delivering timely aid; conducting outreach programs to educate and raise awareness about human trafficking; organizing events such as guest speakers on human trafficking, fundraising meals and community meals at churches and local centers; initiating projects like food drives, donation collections, and support activities for the unhoused and at-risk groups; providing support for local schools and youth programs; and organizing church-led initiatives such as Easter lunch for the homeless, prayer services, and support for victims of human trafficking, emphasizing the church’s role in social justice.



Social Justice Standing Committee

Under the social justice standing committee, members were encouraged to:

- Uphold the life and dignity of the human person
- Advocate for the poor and the vulnerable and their inclusion in society
- Advocate for the dignity of work and the equal rights of workers
- Care for God’s creation
- Educate members and keep them informed of relevant social justice issues
- Initiate resolutions on relevant issues

At the national level, three resolutions were adopted at the national annual meeting of members — Resolution 2024.01 Increase Supported Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness with Mental Health and Mental Illness Issues, Resolution 2024.02 National Universal Pharmacare Program to Include Coverage for Drugs Prescribed for Mental Illness and Resolution 2024.03 Grant the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise Legal Authority to Investigate Environmental and Human Rights Abuses.

To assist with future planning, councils were asked about their main priorities. These were overwhelmingly upholding the life and dignity of

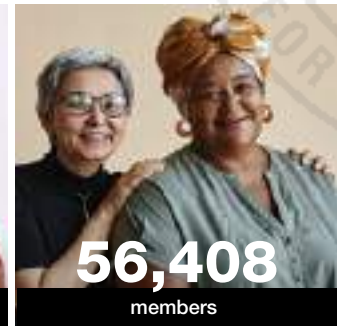


the human person and advocating for the poor and vulnerable and their inclusion in society. Councils at other levels would be wise to ensure that their focus topics fall within this realm of concern.



Organizational Structure and Statistics

NATIONAL COUNCIL



Leadership and Recognition

The League welcomed Connie Crichton (Saskatoon), Gwen Elliott (Camrose), Paddy Fitzgerald Nolan (Sydenham), Hilarion Mitchell (Brampton), Audrey Shelton (Haileybury) and Linda VandenBerg (High Prairie) to the roll of life members in 2024, bringing the total number of life members to 313.

Thirteen members were added to the rolls of Bellelle Guerin award recipients. The number of active members with the Bellelle Guerin pin stood at 180 or 0.3% of the membership. An additional 199 members received a maple leaf service pin. The number of active members with maple leaf service pins stood at 3,536 or 6.3% of the membership.



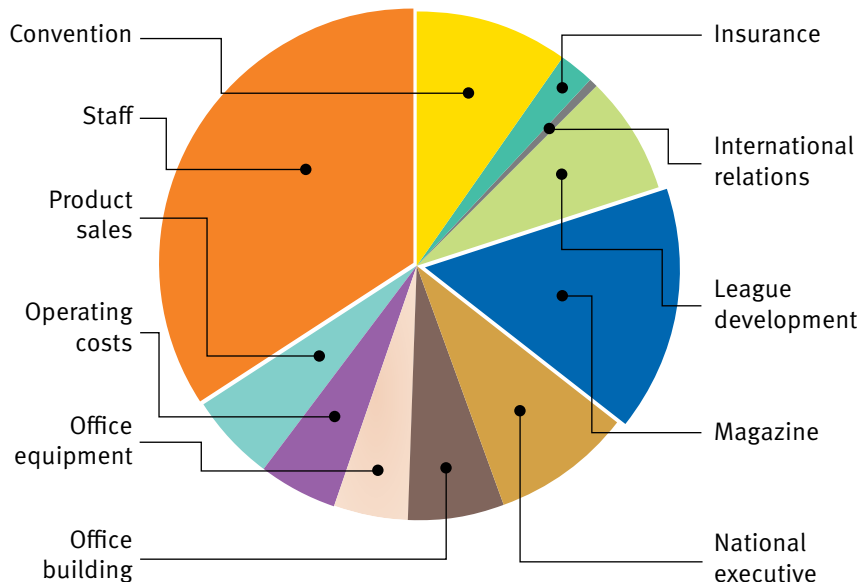
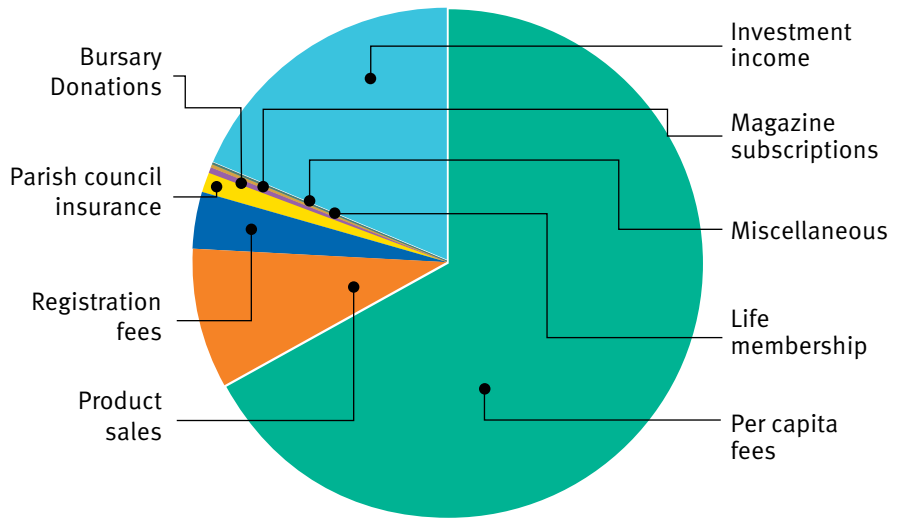
Financial Information

The national treasury was in a stable position on December 31, 2024. Revenue generated for the year totalled \$1,753,177, with 82% of all revenue coming from the national per capita fee allocation, down from 88% in the previous year. The decline in per capita revenue was offset in part by other optional member service fees, such as convention registration fees and national office supply sales.

Total expenditures for the year totalled \$1,406,492, \$179,000 less than the previous year. The Unity Outreach project ended, as did the strategic plan and the multi-year marketing campaign.

The investment portfolio achieved record gains due in large part to the big tech investment in generative artificial intelligence and the ending of uncertainty due to the conclusion of the US federal election. The investment portfolio added just over \$400,000 to the national reserves, which is designated to offset future deficits that will occur as membership declines.

REVENUE RECEIVED	
Per capita fees	\$ 1,449,711
Product sales	\$ 186,907
Registration fees	\$ 78,070
Parish council insurance	\$ 29,001
Magazine subscriptions	\$ 3,248
Life membership	\$ 1,800
Bursary donations	\$ 4,328
Miscellaneous	\$ 112
Investment income	\$ 403,812
\$ 2,156,989	



EXPENDITURES	
Convention	\$ 138,328
Insurance	\$ 31,957
International relations	\$ 8,256
League development	\$ 106,624
Magazine	\$ 217,632
National executive	\$ 122,427
Office building	\$ 89,253
Office equipment	\$ 66,535
Operating costs	\$ 68,581
Product sales	\$ 76,677
Staff	\$ 480,213
\$ 1,406,492	





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