

# The Catholic Women's League of Canada Plans Strategically



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2018-2022





## Introduction:



## Messages from the “Presidents Three”



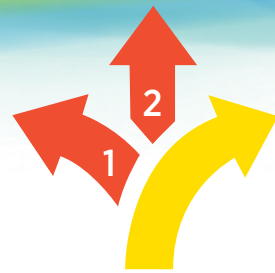
### What is my vision for the League?

I pray for a League where members know and experience God’s unconditional love. I pray for a League where members are so empowered by the gifts of the Spirit they respond to God’s call in joyful service, embracing the vulnerable, marginalized, the weak and the lonely, children at risk, youth in peril, families in turmoil and elders facing end-of-life decisions. I pray for a League where members evidence the fruits of the Spirit by being loving, joyful women who work patiently for all people, whose kindness and goodness touch the lives of all they encounter, who are faithful to the gospel message and live lives of humility and self-control.

As a team, we will discern where we need to focus our energies. There are so many most worthwhile projects we could undertake along with those that for us will always be our passion and require continued vigilance and action. I invite each of us to be the heart and hands of the Living God, reaching out to those most in need—to be beatitude people.

*Margaret Ann Jacobs*

Margaret Ann Jacobs, National President (2016-2018)



## Why Plan Strategically?

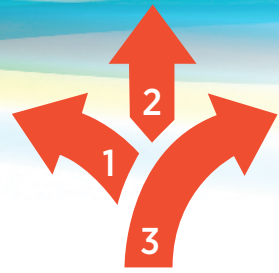
I recently read an interesting story about teamwork. It seems a group of hedgehogs, realizing it was a cold winter, decided to bunch together to keep warm. The problem arose of the quills piercing their neighbours, so they decided to move apart. This resulted in more problems as they started to freeze and die alone. They made the decision to cuddle back together and live with the little piercings caused by the close connection, in order to receive the body heat which allowed them to survive. Harvey MacKay, the author of the column, says this is the “perfect definition of teamwork”.

If a member knows she will be spiritually nourished, enjoy some meaningful social time with likeminded women of faith and become educated about the happenings in her council, she is apt to be more engaged. She will leave [meetings] feeling that her time was well spent, having been given and giving of herself, and having been made to feel fully welcomed, needed and sent. There is nothing like leaving a meeting full of vigour in anticipation of the next step in one’s journey.

The hedgehog story is easily interpreted. The idea of getting together during a cold winter is most appropriate for us in Canada; we seek to do things that will keep us both physically and mentally “warm”. The quills could be difficulties and things that need to be addressed in order to maintain harmony and a sense of purpose in councils. These quills are in every area at one time or another and may be things to be endured in order to promote the greater good. The decision made by the hedgehogs to endure the “quills” was a good one, as the other decision for them, and for us, would be disastrous.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne - M. Gorman".

Anne Gorman, National President (2018-2020)



In response to the question of why now for strategic planning, my immediate reaction was a resounding, why not? The steady decline in membership and the foreseeable certainty that this will continue, along with the lack of willing leaders, is the League's current reality. Across the country non profit groups and associations are vying for relevance, members and engagement and the League is no different. We have to take the future into our own hands. pay attention to the signs of the times and study statistics that confirm what we already instinctively know.

In too many cases and all too often, parish councils struggle to get new members, to elect a full slate of officers or even to find a president. There is little or no connection between members and other levels of the League. Members complain because meetings are tedious or boring. Some new members come once or twice, never to be seen again; others seek action or social justice and may take on a one time project but do not feel connected.

The decline did not happen overnight. National, provincial, diocesan and parish council executives over the years have been managing as they thought best. Various programs and initiatives were developed but leadership continued to be a problem and membership is still decreasing. Add to this the fast pace of technology, competition for women's precious time and the fact the church attendance and the practice of the faith is changing and it becomes clear something needs to be done.

I am convinced the League is on the right path, at the very least, to investigate the possibilities as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the League approaches. There is so much to celebrate, to hang on to and to cherish. Throughout League history adaptations have taken place when the signs of the times indicated adaptation was necessary, and I believe members are being called to do so again.

What inspires me and gives me hope is the deep desire to persevere. The strong desire to keep the League alive, the sincere desire to make sure the League remains a force for good in Canada and in parishes. A passionate desire continues to exist to be a voice for the voiceless and a heart for those who need mercy. That all women will have the opportunity to grow in faith like so many of us have and ensure the League remains the beacon of integrity for which it is known. Let's go forward with courage, zeal and trust in the Holy Spirit and see where we are being asked to go!

*Barbara Dowding*

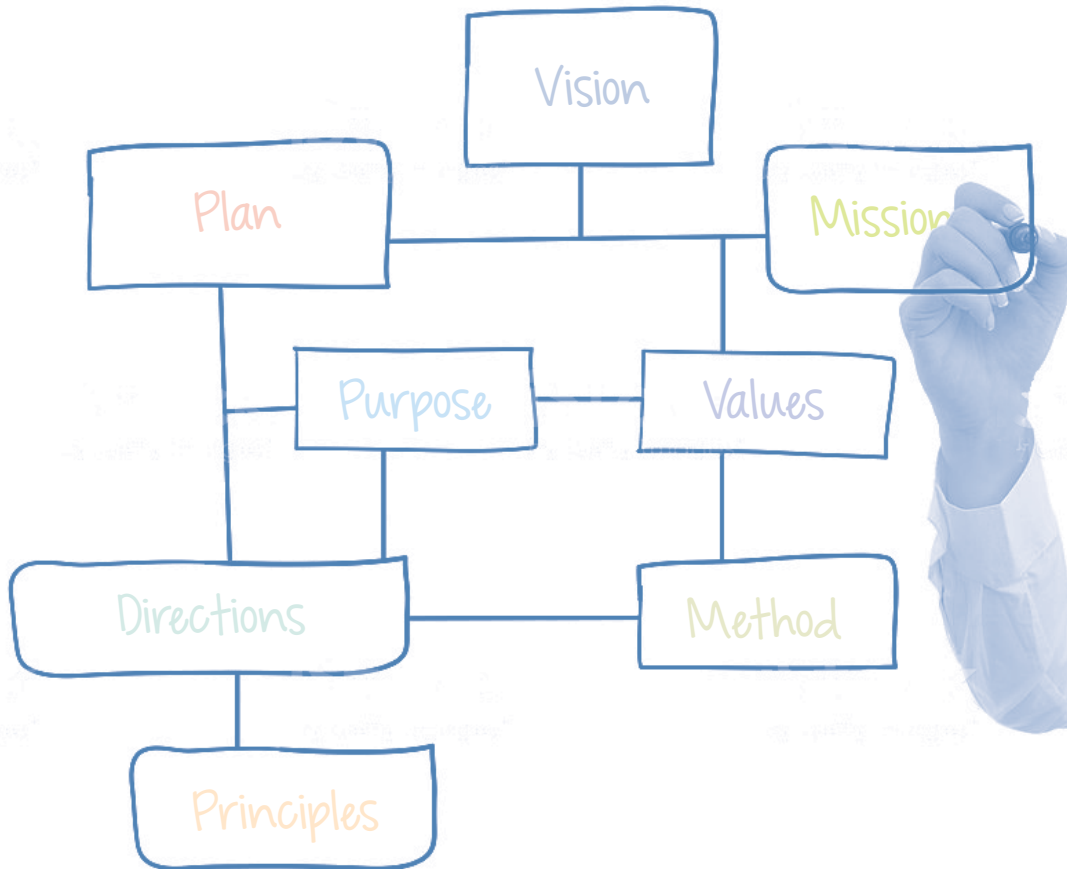
Barbara Dowding, National President (2014-2016)

## Definition

# To Plan Strategically

tōo/ plan/ strə' tējik(ə)lē/

a process for knowledge-based decision making that aligns an organization's activities with its purpose, values, goals and vision of the future



## Method

### Step 1:

## Getting Organized

To plan strategically, the national executive, whose duty as the board of directors encompasses providing the strategic direction for The Catholic Women's League of Canada, realized that it must first become strategic in its own decision making. Moving towards being more strategic has mandated the board to put critical and significant issues facing councils and members at the forefront of every agenda, followed by annual operational planning and then routine business.

Upon recognizing that planning strategically would require an investment in time and talent, the presidents three along with the executive director began a pre-planning phase to guide the efforts of the board/national executive. Items examined included how long the effort would take, who would participate and when, what the current conditions were and what challenges would need to be faced. These initial considerations were captured in a terms of reference for a steering committee.



Approved at the board/national executive's winter 2017 meeting, a steering committee to lead the planning efforts was established. The committee included:

National President Margaret Ann Jacobs

National President-Elect Anne Marie Gorman

National Past President Barbara Dowding

Honorary Life Member Danielle McNeil-Hessian

Ontario Provincial Past President Pauline Krupa


Quebec Provincial Past President Ingrid Lefort

Vancouver Diocesan Past President Roxanne McDonald

Executive Director Kim Scammell

The services of Donna Dunn, CAE of Tecker International were engaged on a consultative basis to provide guidance to the committee and to facilitate some of the planned sessions and workshops.

By August 2018, the steering committee was to present a five-year plan that encompassed all levels of the League, along with a proposed terms of reference for an implementation committee and a proposed process for periodic monitoring, evaluating and updating of the plan so as to ensure that planning strategically would become a process, not a document that could be filed and forgotten.



*"A simple person  
believes anything, but  
a prudent person gives  
thought to their steps"*

(Proverbs 14:15).



## Step 2:

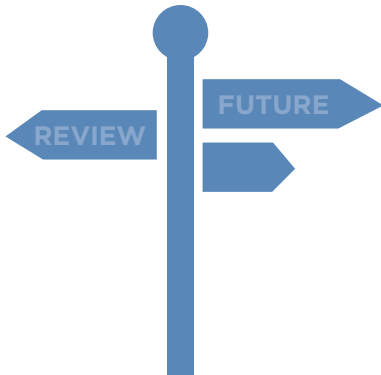
## Taking Stock

In reviewing the history of the League from the perspective of the governing document, the *Constitution & Bylaws*, major structural changes have occurred, on average, every second decade with the exception of the past three decades, indicating that organizational renewal is long overdue. Organizational renewal is the process of reexamining what should be kept, what should be changed, and what should be discontinued.

Over the past thirty years, the League has undertaken two seminal studies that can and should influence any renewal efforts. In 2000, the “vision committee” reported on its research in a document entitled *Woman to Woman: Witnessing to the Future*. In 2008, the national executive engaged a consultant to provide a *Social Marketing Strategy and Framework* which encompassed many of the environmental scans necessary to planning efforts. In addition, many smaller studies were conducted over the years to examine the structure of the League, the alignment of standing committees, the flow of communications and the main activities and primary goals of parish councils.

Upon review and study of these documents, the steering committee concluded that the research done was as relevant in 2017/18 as it was when the studies were conducted. To affirm the assumption that conditions were similar and new research was not required, a cross-country town hall was held as part of the 97<sup>th</sup> annual national convention.





The town hall allowed all members from across Canada to share:

1. What makes you proud to be a member?
2. What should the League emphasize and promote?
3. What is the biggest change, challenge or opportunity facing the League?
4. What would you like to see the League do differently?
5. What would you like to see the League stop doing?
6. What does the future of the League look like to you?

The results of the session overwhelmingly confirmed what had been identified as the environment under which parish councils were operating.

With the League's current reality concretely confirmed, the steering committee and board/national executive turned their attention to the future.

*"Know well the  
condition of your  
flocks, and give  
attention to your  
herds"*

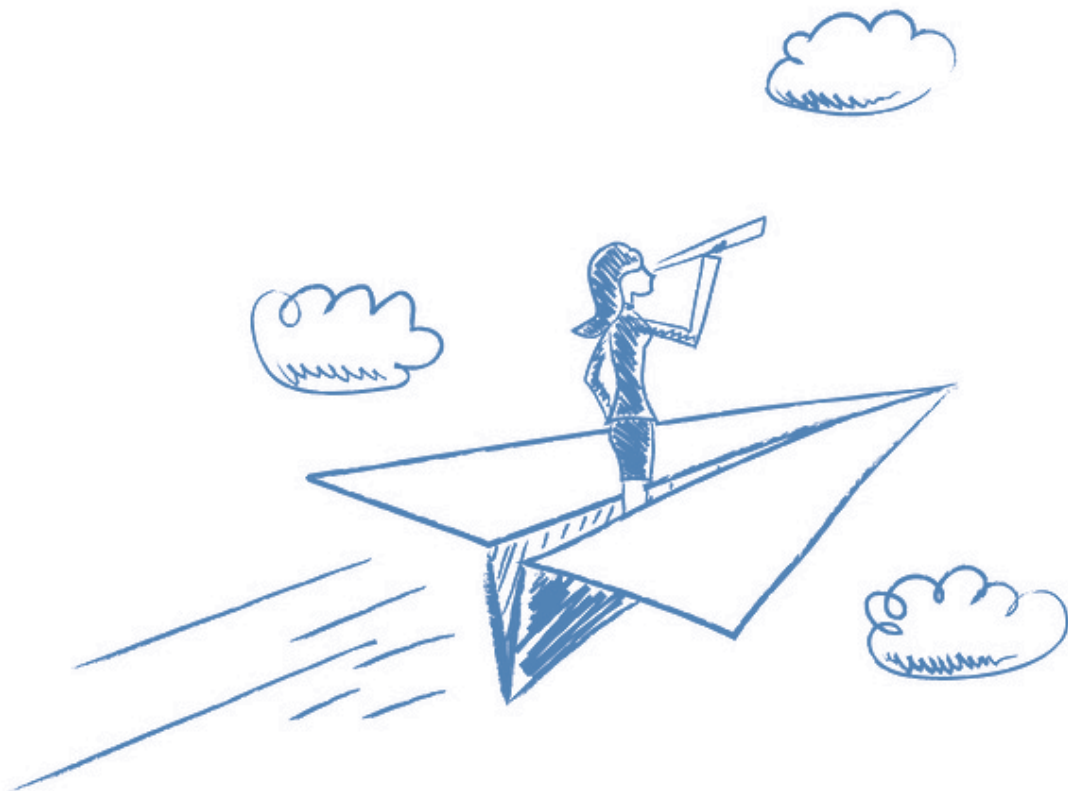
(Proverbs 27:23).

## Step 3:

## Setting Direction

### Guiding Principles

To plan strategically, “a process for knowledge based decision making that aligns an organization’s activities with its purpose, values, goals and vision of the future”, the board/national executive needed to first articulate what these were. In a planning workshop lead by consultant Donna Dunn, the board/national executive and appointed members of the steering committee spent an intensive two days articulating the League’s purpose, values and envisioned future. It also revisited and revised the mission statement. These four statements form the core guiding principles and are the foundation upon which all activities will be measured.



# CORE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Core Purpose:** the reason an organization exists

**Core Values:** the fundamental beliefs of an organization that dictate the behaviour of its membership

**Mission Statement:** short statement that identifies the scope of an organization's operations, i.e. what it does and how it is accomplished

**Envisioned Future:** A vivid description of what the organization strives to become

A key consultation point was included after the core principles were articulated. Members of the steering committee met provincial executives (including diocesan presidents) at their fall meetings to get feedback and revise the core principles as needed. This activity expanded the consultation pool from a core of 26 leaders to 196 members serving at three levels of the League.





The revised core principles were re-presented to that board/national executive at the fall 2017 mid-term meeting and were accepted in principle.

## CORE PURPOSE

Uniting Catholic women to grow in faith, and to promote social justice through service to the church, Canada and the world

## CORE VALUES

**FAITH** – following Catholic teaching  
**SERVICE** – local, national and international  
**SOCIAL JUSTICE** – actively involved in society

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.

## ENVISIONED FUTURE

The Catholic Women's League of Canada is an inclusive and engaged community of Catholic women inspired by faith. It is:

- A vital participant in the church;
- A valued partner for social justice;
- A respected advocate at all government levels;
- Connected to the world.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise person who built their house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish person who built their house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash"

(Matthew 7:24-27).

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Unlike guiding principles which are enduring statements that stand the test of time, the goals and objectives of an organization change as the environment in which the organization operates changes. The organization evolves as goals and objectives are met. This type of planning process is called a “goals approach”.

## Goal:

An outcome that is to be achieved within three to five years

## Objectives:

Set direction toward each goal.

Movement in that direction indicates progress toward the goal.

Forms the measurements/metrics to determine progress.



At the same intensive workshop lead by Donna Dunn in August 2017, the board/national executive and appointed steering committee members, formulated three goals for the organization and a set of objectives for each. The three goals align with each of the three core values and emanate from the core purpose of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada.

The same consultation point was used in fall 2017 with the provincial executives to expand the number of leaders who had input into the goals and objectives. Once the consultations were complete, the steering committee met to assess the input and revise the goals and objectives to meet the needs and expectations of the provincial and diocesan representatives present during the consultations.

## Critical Issues

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Not to lose sight of the deeply held concerns and convictions of members who shared in the town hall, the board/national executive also considered a list of critical issues that need to be addressed, regardless of whether there is movement towards the envisioned future. This type of planning is called a “critical issues approach”. While using two different approaches causes some overlap, the League is assured that major stumbling blocks are addressed whilst moving toward the future.

### Critical Issue

**fundamental policy or program concerns that define the most important situations and choices faced by an organization**

What follows are the three goals, objectives and list of critical issues approved in principle by the board/national executive at the fall 2017 mid-term meeting.

## Goal 1:

Members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada grow in faith by sharing, witnessing, and developing leadership skills to create positive change.

### Objectives:

Increase opportunities for spiritual development

Increase membership

Remove structural impediments to participation and action by increasing flexibility throughout the organization

Increase the capacity and efficiency of leadership

Increase the number and readiness of members to hold office

Increase effectiveness of communication

*"Your kingdom is founded on righteousness and justice; love and faithfulness are shown in all you do." Psalm 89:14*

## Goal 2:

The Catholic Women's League of Canada addresses and supports Catholic social teaching through advocacy.

### Objectives:

Increase members' knowledge of Catholic social teaching

Increase number of members trained to lead advocacy efforts

Increase collaboration with faith organizations and governments

*"No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God."*

Micah 6:8



## Goal 3:

Through outreach and service, members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada foster a culture where all life is valued with dignity and respect.

### Objectives:

Increase participation of diverse cultural and generational groups

Increase awareness and opportunities for parish-based projects that protect and respect all human life

Increase a sense of belonging and connectedness within the organization

*"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me."*

Matthew 25:35-36

## Critical Issues

**Provide valid options in structure and meetings.**

**Address the lack of participation and engagement, disparity in engagement levels and competition for members and prospective members' time.**

**Address the perception of the League, its marketing and promotion.**

**Address the lack of training of members and the resistance to taking on leadership roles.**

**Improve the use of technology, communication methods and tools.**

# STRATEGIES

**Once provided with guiding principles upon which to evaluate all activity, and with goals and objectives established to measure progress, the steering committee was able to undertake the next step in planning, the development of strategies to achieve the goals and realize the envisioned future.**

## Strategy:

**Strategy: Defines how an organization will commit its resources to accomplish its goals**

To accomplish this task, a call was sent for volunteers through the League's communication channels, through provincial executives to diocesan executives to parish executives to members, through the website and through Facebook. Fifty interested members responded to the call. Seven sub-committees, each lead by one member of the steering committee, worked to come up with strategies for two to three of the objectives. The sub-committee leads strove to ensure that all levels and all regions were represented.

For each objective, the sub-committees brainstormed a list of strategies. From the long list, the pros and cons of each strategy were examined to narrow the long list to a shorter list. With the shorter list, committees examined each proposed strategy to select those with the highest probability of success. The measures used were necessity (is the strategy necessary to achieve progress), feasibility (can the strategy be effectively executed) and appropriateness (is the strategy consistent with the core purpose and values).

The steering committee gathered each list and re-examined each strategy in light of the objectives, paying particular attention to the sufficiency of each set of strategies, i.e., if taken in combination, would the set of strategies be sufficient to achieve the intended objective. The committee also spent some time ranking the strategies lists in terms of how critical the strategies were so as to prioritize them appropriately.

## Step 4:

## Refine and Adopt the Plan



The proposed strategies were presented to the board/national executive at the winter 2018 mid-term meeting and were approved in principle. Another key consultation point was included after the strategies were articulated. Members of the steering committee and other leaders presented the strategies at 44 diocesan and provincial conventions. This activity expanded the consultation pool from the core 26 leaders to 4,060 members serving at all levels of the League.

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22).

What follows represents the culmination of 18 months of concerted planning efforts by the steering committee. It represents the desires of past committees, the viewpoints of current members at all levels and across all regions in Canada, the enthusiasm and hope of the national executive, and the tireless efforts of Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Pauline Krupa, Ingrid Lefort and Roxanne McDonald who toiled in the vineyard. It represents an investment in the future of the League.

The foundation of The Catholic Women's League of Canada is solid. The League is as relevant today as it was in 1920 when it was first formed nationally. Members are as committed to their faith and to living out their Catholic values in society as were their foremothers. Members are visionary; members are leaders; members will grow in faith and strengthen the church through their participation.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed" (Proverbs 16:3).

Kim Scammell  
Executive Director  
August 10, 2018

*Dedicated to the memory of Life Member Suzanne Barrette whose unwavering faith in the future contributed to what is possible today.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The board/national executive thanks the following individuals for their passion and dedication to the strategic planning process.

### Steering Committee

Barbara Dowding  
Anne Marie Gorman  
Margaret Ann Jacobs

Pauline Krupa  
Ingrid Lefort  
Roxanne McDonald

Danielle McNeil-Hessian  
Kim Scammell

### Town Hall Secretaries

Connie Asp  
Marguerite Attelbery  
Debbie Baich  
Barbara Bailey  
Peggy Barrette  
Marie Barry  
Angelika Beauchamp  
Marcelle Beaulieu  
Carla Beckett  
Joline Belliveau  
Marilyn Blew  
Marie Cameron  
Marlita Chase  
Pat Chin  
Cecile Condon  
Marguerite Critchley  
Louise Dalton  
Pat Darling  
Marisa De Filippo  
Jackie Deatilleur  
Deborah Desrocher  
Waveney Duarte  
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Harriet Duynisveld  
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Ingrid Eggerman  
Lisa Fillingham  
Suzan Frederick  
Deanna Frison  
Mirian Ghiati  
Christa Gillmair  
Nancy Guyea  
Yvonne Harland  
Colleen Hill  
Suzana Haska  
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Joan Jakubo  
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Susan Kaller  
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Claudette Langdon  
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Suzanne LeFebvre  
Joan Lemay  
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Zenora Mahabal  
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Sharon Mavor

Rita McGregor  
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Susan Melchiorre  
Erin Merth  
Lidia Moodie  
Suzie Noaro  
Liz Northam  
Josie Parker  
Kathleen Provost  
Sharon Radchenko  
Shirley Rohlheiser  
Marilyn Schuck  
Ruby Sharpe  
Emeria Soares  
Sandra Stajduhar  
Frances Stang  
Mae Steck  
Leona Streifel  
Francine Tournier  
Margaret Van Meeuwen  
Anne Vincelli  
Janet Warren  
Nadia Willigar  
Ly Wuthrich  
Audrey Zimmerman



## **Sub-Committee Members**

Alicia Ambrosio	Danielle Kirpluk	Diane Revus
Joline Belliveau	Kathleen Kufeldt	Vanessa Rigolo
Shirley Bernier	Fran Lucas	Natalie Rose
Liz Bortolussi	Lynn Macdonald	Marjorie Sarna
Joline Capina	Sheila Manuel	Josie Schill
Glenda Carson	Colleen Martin	Sr. Susan Scott
Sharon Cieben	Christine Mason	Ruby Sharpe
Madonna Clark	Janice McDougall	Mable Solomon
Jeannie Coleman	Cathy McInney	Samantha Strudwick
Marguerite Critchley	Mary McLean	Procelyn Tan
Cynthia Diangkinay	Jane McNamara	Janet Terrio
Shari Guinta	Susan Melchiorre	Francine Tournier
Velma Harasen	Jeannette Melnychuk	Janet Warren
Edna Hodgson	Mary Nordick	St. Mary CWL (Fort Frances)
Joleene Kemp	Winetta Nguyen	

## **Workshop Presenters**

Betty Colaneri	Margaret Ann Jacobs	Colleen Martin
Barbara Downing	Pauline Krupa	Roxanne McDonald
June Fuller	Ingrid Lefort	Danielle McNeil Hessian
Anne Marie Gorman	Fran Lucas	Jacqueline Nogier
Shari Guinta	Anne Madden	Kim Scammell

Appreciation is also extended to the over 650 table secretaries who took notes during the diocesan and provincial workshops.

## GOAL 1:

**Members of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada grow in faith by sharing, witnessing and developing leadership skills to create positive change.**

Objectives						
	Increase opportunities for spiritual development	Increase membership	Remove structural impediments to participation and action by increasing flexibility throughout the organization	Increase the capacity and efficiency of leadership	Increase the number and readiness of members to hold office	Increase effectiveness of communication
Strategies						
<b>Year 1:</b>		G1.B2: Increase awareness about the League within the church through marketing.	G1.C1: Reduce the number of standing committees to three to align with the core values of faith, service and social justice.			
<b>Year 2:</b>	G1.A1: Develop and deliver spiritual programs at all levels.			G1.D3: Capitalize on members’ willingness to take on short-term leadership responsibilities.		
<b>Year 3:</b>	G1.A2: Network with other Catholic organizations to capitalize on their existing programs.	G1.B1: Provide opportunities to increase women’s spirituality as a core objective.			G1.E1: Employ technology to develop training tutorials to meet the needs of our current demographic.	G1.F1: Improve, streamline and expedite internal and external communications.
<b>Year 4:</b>			G1.C3: Streamline executive officers at all levels and create distinctive roles for each level.	G1.D2: Capitalize on the expertise of others, including engaging life members as mentors.		
<b>Year 5:</b>	G1.A3: Develop a protocol to periodically evaluate existing spiritual programs.		G1.C4: Expand the criteria for eligibility for office. G1.C2: Examine the current levels of the League.	G1.D1: Rebrand leadership development programs and develop interpersonal skills programs.	G1.E2: Recruit existing parish leaders.	

## GOAL 2:

The Catholic Women’s League of Canada addresses and supports Catholic social teaching through advocacy.

Objectives			
	Increase members’ knowledge of Catholic social teaching	Increase number of members trained to lead advocacy efforts	Increase collaboration with faith organizations and governments
Strategies			
Year 1:			
Year 2:	G2.A2: Empower members by providing educational opportunities to learn more about Catholic social teaching.		
Year 3:		G2.B2: Access experts from other organizations to train members in leading advocacy efforts.  G2.B1: Develop and deliver advocacy workshops at all levels.	G2.C3: Examine and improve the process of communication and advocacy with all government levels that will allow for respectful dialogue and constructive feedback.
Year 4:	G2.A1: Identify and communicate principles of Catholic social teaching.		G2.C1: Identify specific faith organizations with similar proposed, core values and missions.
Year 5:			G2.C2: Clarify the manner that collaboration will take place with other faith organizations.

### GOAL 3:

Through outreach and service, members of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada foster a culture where all life is valued with dignity and respect.

Objectives			
	Increase participation of diverse cultural and generational groups	Increase awareness and opportunities for parish-based, short term outreach and service projects	Increase a sense of belonging and connectedness within the organization
Strategies			
<b>Year 1:</b>			
<b>Year 2:</b>	G3.A1: Address misconceptions about the League. G3.A2: Embrace diverse cultures and ages.	G3.B1: Create ready-made adaptable toolkits for use in parishes.	
<b>Year 3:</b>	G3.A3: Actively engage new members and members who are homebound.	G3.B3: Become an action-based organization.	G3.C3: Focus on the spiritual and social aspects in councils.  G3.C2: Develop tools to increase connectedness among members.  G3.C4: Encourage multi-and inter-generational activity, and diversity.  G3.C1: Validate all members.
<b>Year 4:</b>			
<b>Year 5:</b>	G3.A4: Focus on inter-generational skills mentorship.	G3.B2: Develop local partnerships.	



## GOAL 4:

### Address Critical Issues

Objective					
	Validate options in structure and meetings	Participation/ lack of engagement/ disparity in engagement/ competition for time	Perception of the League/marketing/ promotion	Lack of training of members/ resistance to taking on leadership roles	Use of technology/ communication methods and tools
Strategies					
Year 1:	G4.A1: Simplify procedures and reporting processes.	G4.B1: Include (leave no member behind) and affirm (make members feel welcomed, needed and wanted).	G4.C2: Market the League as an association that showcases the strength of Catholic women grounded in faith ready and willing to act.  G4.C3: Position the League as an organization for all Catholic women that encourages and supports their role and responsibility in the church and society.		
Year 2:				G4.D1: Restructure the existing standing committee structure at the parish level to respect the uniqueness of councils.	
Year 3:					G4.E1: Create a smartphone app to promote the League's objectives to keep "users" (members and others) up to date and motivated.
Year 4:	G4.A5: Enhance the role of the standing committee chairpersons from a reporting role to rotating the meeting program among them.  G4.A2: Educate members on the core purpose of the League.	G4.B3: Develop education modules (faith, organization, duties) and tools that encourage action ("to do" list for all members).		G4.D2: Develop training programs to meet needs of members using technology.  G4.D3: Introduce project-based committees beginning at the parish level.	
Year 5:	G4.A4: Emphasize small Christian community model of "pray, reflect, act".  G4.A3: Emphasize the need for education about the priorities of the League.	G4.B2: Reorganize.	G4.C1: Transform name, brand and image to reflect current trends and the envisioned future.	G4.D4: Evaluate and possibly redesign eligibility to run for office at higher levels.	G4.E2: Research software to facilitate collaboration and ease the burden among teams.

## Notes

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