



## Lutheran Women

Women of St. Matthew's have always made a difference in the life of our faith community as we helped women grow in faith and explored ways to serve our church, community and world . According to author Sid Crow, in "The History of St. Matthew 's" the first Ladies Aid was organized on November 7, 1907 with 11 members. Meetings were held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month, monthly dues were 10 cents and they made quilts and night robes for the Welland Hospital.

Over the years there have been many name changes; Missionary Society, Women of the Church , Evangelical Lutheran Church Women, Lutheran Church Women, ELW and most recently Lutheran Women. Meetings were held in homes or the church in groups large or small or in circles named after biblical women.

In the words of a former member and Church secretary Aldith Beatty: "In the early 50's there was a "tempest in a teapot" at St. Matthew's. The LCA in Philadelphia and our Eastern Synod had decreed that all congregations in its membership have one Official Women's Organization. No more separate Ladies Aid, Women's Missionary Society or Altar Guild. "You shall be one!". The VIP's had spoken. Each of these groups had been doing a splendid job with its own special projects –so why rock the boat? There was considerable resistance to this plan, but eventually everything was sorted out and peace was restored. The Altar Guild opted out because of their highly specialized work of caring for the Altar, the Sanctuary and the Paraments. However they were always more than willing to co-operate with the new group, and in fact several ladies were members of both groups."

Our nature and purpose remained the same as it was updated to meet the needs of our members and the changing needs of our church, community and world.

"Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, ELW shall be a community of women which recognizes the authority of Scriptures in its understanding of mission, in the affirmation, growth and development of women, and in the expression of faith in action.

The purpose of this auxiliary shall be to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through its own program and through the program of this church."

In keeping with our Nature and Purpose to follow the Scriptures, over the years we studied many topics from resources published by the wider church. We used other studies as well including stories of many biblical women. "The Greatest Story Ever Told ( The Bible ") led us through both Old and New Testaments , providing us insights as to how God's plan ties everything together.

Of interest is the fact that during the Pandemic we learned how to maneuver ZOOM and carried on our Studies and gatherings that way.

We grew and developed in many ways: By attending Lutheran Women Conference meetings, Conventions, as well as participating and hosting World Day of Prayer Services. These opportunities helped us to appreciate, understand, and respect women from all denominations, faith traditions and cultures .

Working together in the church kitchen for various luncheons, ( funerals and seniors), we developed deep caring friendships with each other that have lasted through the years. We, who are now seniors, fondly remember being mentored by numerous ladies such as Betty Scheel and Joey Rose. The things they taught us have remained in our hearts to this day.

LW members have continually expressed their faith in action through their generous and faithful free will offerings, allowing us to care for others. Contributions over the years have been made to:

**GLOBALLY:** Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR); Syrian Refugees (sweaters); Fort McMurray ( Fires).

**THE WIDER CHURCH:** Waterloo Lutheran Seminary (WLS); Women's Auxiliary of Seminary; Camp Edgewood.

**LOCALLY- (COMMUNITY):** Layettees for Needy Moms; Gifts for Teens (Community Christmas Toys); Soup Kitchen (Hope Centre); more than 400 hand knitted hats given to various groups; Heartland Forest ( money for planting trees); Niagara Nutrition Partners (snacks for school kids).

**St. Matthew's:** Gifts & cards for Shut-Ins; Roof repairs, Fire Upgrades and Furnace Fund ; Stove and Dishwasher costs & maintenance; Christmas Baskets (Social Ministry).

It wasn't all work and no play! Over the last few decades in June, we would have lunch together at a restaurant and then visit some Niagara attraction such as the Butterfly Conservatory, Heartland Forest, Sand Sculptures and Glass Blowing . These outings further strengthened our sisterhood through conversations, fun and laughter .

During the past 2 years our attendance has been quickly declining. After many prayers and discussions we have made the very difficult decision to disband with the hope that we will still gather a few times a year.

Our remaining funds will be used to pay for our Shut - In cards and the postage.

We will always remember and cherish all the ways that God has led the Women of St. Matthew's to make a difference in the life of our faith community as we helped women grow in faith and explored meaningful and creative ways to serve our church, community and world .

Let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Submitted by Marilyn Schultz & Dianne Yungblut