

Good morning. I am Sudee Campbell, diocesan president of the Episcopal Church Women. The ECW organization welcomes and incorporates all women. It supports the many ministries of our diocese as well as offering its own opportunities for worship, prayer, education and fellowship – across our entire diocese.

Our immediate past presidents gave ministry presentations to our Bishop-nominees earlier this year. They noted that the ECW holds historic significance in nurturing this diocese – from its mission status in the 1800s, to its full-fledged status as the Diocese in Louisiana, and in its creation of a second diocese – Western Louisiana, over 40 years ago. The ECW has been there to assist in this growth in every way. The ECW has quietly supported every ministry in Louisiana in our 13 decades of being and has included multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial representation on our board for decades.

ALL women are Episcopal Church Women, regardless of how we may be organized in our congregations. It is through God's love and transforming grace, that we will continue to adapt ourselves to do God's work. Episcopal Church Women answer the call to service through many ministries such as: Altar Guild, Christian Formation, Readers, Choir, Vestries – all while still being wives, mothers, and career women.

Yes, we ordinary women accomplish extraordinary things to nurture and empower each other in our faith communities.

Episcopal Church Women have literally changed the world through the United Thank Offering.

At the 1889 Triennial Meeting in New York, the Women's Auxiliary instituted the "United Offering" to support mission projects and to send women missionaries as nurses and teachers. Now, the United Thank Offering collects the offerings of our Church in thanksgiving for the many blessings of this life. While UTO has grown over the years, it continues to promote the spiritual practice of gratitude.

Another ministry of the women started in 1888 in New York City at the Church of the Holy Communion. Mary Ann Drake Fargo and a small group of women began sending bundles of church periodicals, prayer books and Bibles for free – via her family business, the Wells Fargo stagecoach line – to missionaries in the Dakota Territory. Thus began the Church Periodical Club.

Today, the ECW helps our own Louisiana seminarians by providing funds for their textbooks through CPC "ingatherings" held in our local churches. Our ECW also supports the CPC's National Book Fund and Miles of Pennies program.

Episcopal Church Women face new challenges that require creative and intentional approaches to living our Baptismal Covenant. We serve whole-heartedly in a very noisy world, and joyfully share the love of Jesus Christ in our communities! As our past presidents have noted, women at the local level serve in ALL aspects of congregational life.

The ECW serves at the Deanery level by sponsoring a spring and fall meeting for women each year! We host a diocesan-wide ECW Annual Gathering (even during Covid, carefully!) and shepherd the UTO and CPC gatherings.

We annually attend the Province IV ECW meetings and every third year, we send four delegates to the national ECW's Triennial Meeting held concurrently with General Convention. Our mission work goes internationally, not only through UTO and CPC, but also through our personal or parish mission ventures around the world.

ECW is the best networking tool that the Diocese has because our members are involved at every level of the church. We bring women from all over the Diocese of Louisiana together to share information, ideas, solutions and resources.

The ECW has a 135-year-old track record of nurturing people to actively engage in church ministries and in incorporating people where their energy and talents are needed. This is a vital component of growing the church. May God continue to bless our work in mission and ministry!

Episcopal Church Women also honor their own and we would like Bishop Thompson and Bishop-Elect Duckworth to share with us in acknowledging the national Triennial Meeting's Distinguished Woman from the Diocese of Louisiana – an extraordinary woman from Trinity Church, Morgan City, our own – Judy Weber.