



HDCCW HAPPENINGS

SPIRITUALITY LEADERSHIP SERVICE

President's Message

Dear Ladies,
"And the angel said unto them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke 2:10

Advent and Christmas are upon us, one of the most wonderful and joyous times of the year.



My hope for you is to have a spiritual Advent journey this year. Take some time amid all the hustle and bustle, baking and shopping to spend some time reflecting on the true meaning of Christmas. Spend some time in

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, go to an Advent Retreat or read some daily spiritual reflections. It's too easy to get caught up in all the things we need to do in preparation for the holiday and become stressed. I hope you can spend some quality time with your families. Another way to get in the holiday spirit is to help those less fortunate than ourselves. Visit someone in a nursing home, send a card to shut-ins, and help prepare a meal for the homeless.

I had the privilege of attending the National Council of Catholic Women Convention in Minneapolis this November. We had a wonderful keynote speaker, author Liz Kelly,

who spoke about the Good Shepherd. For me, the best part is meeting women from all over the United States and sharing ideas. We are all sisters in Christ. We were able to venerate a First Class relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis who said "The Eucharist is the highway to heaven." Go to our Facebook page for more pictures from the convention.

I wish all of you a Merry and Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Jeanne Warren
HDCCW President

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
-Isaiah 40:3

Message from Bishop Gainer

Dear Members of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women,

The New Year always brings with it a sense of wonder and excitement. We look forward to the new opportunities, new experiences and even the new challenges that await us. As we start this year, let us reflect on these words from Isaiah. "They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint." (Isaiah 40:31) I find these words inspiring, especially at the start of a new year. There is great reassurance in knowing that our Lord will give us the strength to embrace those new opportunities.

One of these new opportunities is the call we have all received to renew our love and belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. During this time of Eucharistic Revival, each of you, as members of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, are in a unique position to help share the truth of the Eucharist. Your faith, your witness to the Real Presence can touch the lives of women, and in turn families, throughout the Diocese. All of us are called to respond to our Lord's call that we read in the Gospel of Matthew to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

As I bring this message to a close, I wish to take this opportunity to thank your council leadership and all of the members of the HDCCW for your service, good works and faithfulness throughout our Diocese. Your work to support those in need in our communities, and your prayers for our clergy and Diocese, are having an impact. I am forever grateful for the contributions you make to our Diocesan Church.

May the Lord continue to richly bless you and the work of the Council of Catholic Women.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer , Bishop of Harrisburg

Board Happenings

<p>HDCCW BOARD MEETING NOVEMBER 19, 2022</p>	<p>97th ANNUAL CONVENTION APRIL 15, 2023</p>	<p>PRO-LIFE/SPIRITUAL ADOPTION BABY SHOWER</p>
<p>President Warren’s agenda began with Thanksgiving Words of Wisdom from our Spiritual Director, Father Ted Keating.</p> <p>Each district president reported on the accomplishments of their respective parishes. Keep up the great work ladies!! The Community Concerns and International Concerns Commission chairs shared reports which can be read in this issue. The convention committee discussed plans for our annual HDCCW Convention. <i>Details to follow.</i></p> <p>Council Insights- Visit the video link on our website to hear interviews with Board members on a variety of topics. Suggestions for future interviews are welcome.</p> <p>Gigi Luto thanked all who participated in the Honor Guard at the funeral Mass for Life Member, Anna Shepos, which was celebrated at Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish in Harrisburg.</p>	<p>“Live in the Love of Christ”</p> <p>The Convention budget, presented by convention treasurer, Judy Andidora, was presented and accepted by the Board on November 19th. The Board also approved the keynote speaker, Elizabeth Kelly. Information about Liz can be found at https://www.lizk.org/</p> <p>HDCCW will once again be holding the cover Art Contest for area school students. We will be sponsoring the Silent Basket Auction which will benefit the Scholarship Committee. Check the HDCCW website for details.</p> <p>www.hdccw.webs.com</p> <div data-bbox="630 1083 1024 1377" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><i>From the Board of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women</i></p>	<p>All are welcome to join us for a Baby Shower with refreshments and games on <u>Saturday, February 4th</u>, from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at the Diocesan Center, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg. All baby item donations will be distributed to Pro-Life organizations in the Diocese. RSVP by emailing us at hdccwcommunitycommission@gmail.com or text/call Alycia Laureti at 570-590-1116 by Monday, January 30th.</p>
<p>NCCW PROVINCE DIRECTOR</p>		<p>HDCCW AWARDS</p>
<p>It pleases the Board to announce that Alycia Laureti will continue to serve as the NCCW Philadelphia Province Director for the next two years.</p>		<p>Applications are now being accepted for the Our Lady of Good Counsel award, the Golden Rose award, and HDCCW Scholarships. Deadline to apply is March 31, 2023. Applications can be found at the HDCCW website.</p>
		<p>WEEKEND RETREAT JUNE 16-18, 2023</p>
		<p>Registration information will be coming in the new year for our annual weekend retreat held at Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Reverend Michael Rothan will serve as our Retreat Master. Mark your calendars.</p>



In Memoriam
Anna Shepos (1928-2022)



Anna served as a Parish President, Diocesan President from 1988-1990, and NCCW Philadelphia Province Director. Please pray for the repose of her soul and for comfort for her family and friends.

Eternal Rest, grant unto her, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Commission & District Happenings

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Bonjour, Hola, Nǎn hǎo, Ciao, Guten Tag, Goedendag, Yassou, Dzień dobry, and Hello! The community commission wishes you happy greetings!

We are happy to share some spiritual and fun-filled projects to share with your CCW, family and friends.

The NCCW Annual Day of Prayer and Fasting and Almsgiving to end World Hunger was recognized on **November 17, 2022**. As we continue to give thanks throughout the holiday season, the HDCCW encourages our Council sisters to join us in prayer and fasting and remember those in need.

In thanksgiving for all that God has blessed us with; please take the time to fast and pray. If you fast or give up something you like, or do not eat in a favorite restaurant this day, you can donate the savings to your favorite charity.

Prayer for the National Day of Prayer and Fasting:

We ask You Father to hold in Your arms those in most need. Give them the shelter, protection, and nourishment when they most need it. Grant us the strength, will, and ability to do our part to help those that go without. As always, we lift this prayer up through the intercession of your Blessed Mother



and our Patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Amen.



As we know, we could sure use a lot of kindness in our communities. The Kindness Rocks Project does just that! The purpose is simple- to foster relationships within communities and lift others up through simple acts of kindness. Help spread some kindness in your parish and community. It is a great way to get your parish family together. It can be a wonderful family project, as well as individuals getting together creating and placing the rocks around to brighten someone's day.

For more information and details on how to become a part of the project, please visit <https://www.thekindnessrocksproject.com/>. Please contact a member of the commission with any questions.

Please join us each Wednesday during Advent as we journey through the Nativity with the Stations of the Crib. This is inspired by the book, "Stations of the Crib: A Journey of Hope from Advent to Epiphany" by Joseph Nassal, CPPS.

The stations will be recited every Wednesday evening at 7pm via ZOOM. See page 8 for login information.

-submitted by *Alycia Laureti, Kathy Kokoski and Debbie VanNoy*
hdccwcommunitycommission@gmail.com

DAUPHIN DEANERY

Greetings!!

The Dauphin Deanery is comprised of the hard-working ladies from the following affiliated parishes:

- Holy Name of Jesus*
- Our Lady Help of Christians*
- Seven Sorrows B.V.M.*
- Saint Catherine Labouré*
- Saint Joan of Arc*
- Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque*

Last year, the Deanery was blessed to have Our Lady Help of Christians join us. They are formerly from the Northumberland Deanery. Due to consolidations, they were made part of Dauphin Deanery.

While the parishes in the Deanery are very active, I would like to highlight just a few of the many activities they have done over the past several months:

- Guests were welcomed at the Synod Mass.
- A "back to school" drive for Silence of Mary was sponsored.
- Tuesday prayers were conducted.
- A Mass for deceased council members was held.
- The annual Pet Blessing was hosted.

The Deanery is participating once again in the Boxes of Joy, and some will be distributing poinsettias to shut-ins and parishioners in nursing homes.

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CONEWAGO DISTRICT

This is my third year serving as President of the Conewago District Council of Catholic Women. We are slowly coming back to normal as we again meet in-person at meetings after the pandemic. The pandemic did, however, offer us zoom meetings as an alternative. We are taking advantage of that at times so that all our members who wish to participate can. Our Conewago District affiliated parishes are once again responding to the needs of the Church and their communities.



Affiliated Parishes

Saint Joseph, the Worker Saint Francis Xavier
Saint Vincent de Paul Immaculate Heart of Mary

I am so grateful to all our members who give of their time and talent to their Councils and to the Conewago District. They have prayed and worked tirelessly to accomplish the CCW mission of supporting and empowering each other and their communities.

Our parishes have sent cards to parishioners for various occasions, delivered fruit baskets to the homebound, participated in WRAP Sunday, coordinated a Box of Joy program as well as contributing to the various Giving Tree and other Advent programs. In addition, some have raised money for Water for Life and supported programs for our troops, seminarians, religious, and prisoners. They have extended themselves through various prayer shawl ministries and provided food for soup kitchens and food pantries. Spiritually, among other things, our parishes have participated in weekly Adoration, the HDCCW weekly rosary, the HDCCW *Fall Retreat*, and the CDCCW Lenten Retreat.

*-submitted by Nancy M. Newbold
 Conewago District President*

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During the pandemic, we tried to keep ladies engaged. We took this opportunity to reevaluate our Morning Day of Prayer. We now work with the Parish CCWs to host various retreats during the Council year. A guide has been provided to the parishes, but the topics/themes are the work of their members. The Deanery invites other Deaneries to join us. We hope you can join us on December 3, 2022 for our Advent Retreat entitled "Holy Moments."

*-submitted by Alycia Laureti
 Dauphin Deanery President*

INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS

2022 BOXES OF JOY COLLECTION



FOR CHILDREN WHO WISH FOR JUST ONE GIFT

TOTAL = 1950

Thank you to all parishes who participated in this year's **Boxes of Joy** collection and to all the CCW ladies who helped to unload the cases on collection days. Thank you to Father James Lease for blessing the boxes.

-submitted by Audra Shaub

hdccwinternationalcommission@gmail.com



Saint Theresa	381	Sacred Heart, Cornwall	88	Saint Joseph the Worker	51
Saint Francis Xavier	218	Saint Monica, Sunbury	87	Saint Joseph, Berwick	35
Saint Joan of Arc	207	Saint Joseph, Danville	83	Slagle family	23
Seven Sorrow BVM	144	Saint Margaret Mary	81	Saint Bernadette	16
Saint Catherine Laboure	126	Our Lady Help of Christians	76	Holy Infant	14
Sacred Heart, Lewisburg	105	Saint Vincent, Hanover	60	Our Lady of Good Counsel	5
Our Lady of Lourdes	90	Holy Name	59	Saint Peter, Elizabethtown	1

History Corner

Susan Merfa

HDCCW President 1986-88

My affiliation with the National Council of Catholic Women began in the late 1960's when, as a young mother, I became a member of the Parish Council of Catholic Women at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Abbottstown. After serving several positions there, I became president and therefore a member of the Conewago District Council of Catholic Women. I stayed involved and eventually became president at the district level; thus making me a member of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (HDCCW).

The HDCCW board meetings were held quarterly on a Sunday from 2-4 PM in the employee dining room of the original building. We would have a break during the meeting, when an assigned district would provide snacks. Our board consisted of officers, life members/advisory committee, commission chairmen, and district presidents. The commissions included: Church Communities, Retreats, Family Affairs, Pro Life, Community Affairs, Migrant Ministries, International Affairs, Organization Services, Legislation, Special Diocesan Activities, Public Relations, Parliamentarian, and Historian. Our spiritual moderator was Rev. Paul Miller, my brother-in-law. Our directory was fondly called the Blue Book.

After serving two years as district president, I was asked to serve as Family Affairs Commission Chairman at the Diocesan level. I then served as Vice President for two years. I remember the day I received a telephone call from Marian Sneeringer who asked me to serve as President of the Harrisburg Diocesan Board. I was so honored and humbled! Of course, I said "yes." I remember at the convention Mass celebrated by Bishop William Keeler, we sang the hymn "Here I am, Lord." I sang

it with much sincerity, particularly the words, "I will hold your people in my heart." It brought tears to my eyes, realizing that I would now hold the ladies of the HDCCW in my heart.

Speaking of the HDCCW conventions, we held them on a Monday. Each district was assigned to host the convention. Most districts chose the Penn Harris Hotel in Camp Hill as the site for the convention since it would accommodate the 500 to 800 participants. We were able to assume all the duties in the Conewago District, as we had all nine parishes affiliated.

The Board meeting was held Sunday afternoon, followed by a break and then the Board dinner attended by board members and guests. As my gift to the board, I gave each one a ceramic statue

of the Good Shepherd, which I had purchased as green ware, cleaned, had fired and painted. I made 90 of them. It was a labor of love!



The convention began with registration, followed by the keynote speaker, the celebration of Mass, and lunch. The afternoon was spent attending workshops, displays and meditation room. The closing banquet was held at 6:00 PM. Of course, all the ladies wore their beautiful hats. Most of us stayed over for a second night. We still had our hospitality room available, so we spent time together (partied) again. It was a lot of fun. We made many friendships.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the four National CCW Conventions that I was privileged to attend. The first one was when I was president of the Conewago DCCW. It was held in San Antonio, Texas. It was the first flight that I ever experienced, and I found out later that we flew over a tropical storm to get there. It was not a very good experience for me, and I swore that if I wasn't so far away, I would walk home. I was really glad to be there, though, with women from all over the United States. It helped me see the enormity of the National Council of Catholic Women and all that they do.

The ladies from Texas treated us like royalty. We went to John Connelly's ranch and met him and his wife along with their Angus cattle. We also traveled to Mexico and attended one of the markets. I still have some of the items that I purchased. This was an experience I would never have had if it was not for CCW.

Anna Dill Gamble served as the first HDCCW President beginning in 1924. Listed below are more recent leaders of our organization.

<i>Susan Merfa</i>	<i>1986</i>
<i>Anna Shepos</i>	<i>1988</i>
<i>Sylvia Weaver</i>	<i>1990</i>
<i>Kathryn Memmi</i>	<i>1991</i>
<i>Carmelia Urich</i>	<i>1994</i>
<i>Louise Condon</i>	<i>1996</i>
<i>Peg Clissa</i>	<i>1998</i>
<i>Patricia Leone</i>	<i>2000</i>
<i>Betty Kress</i>	<i>2002</i>
<i>Dolores Stichter</i>	<i>2004</i>
<i>Mrs. Joyce Scott</i>	<i>2006</i>
<i>Barbara McCarthy</i>	<i>2008</i>
<i>Bonnie Onomastico</i>	<i>2010</i>
<i>Anne Hasting</i>	<i>2012</i>
<i>Jeanne Warren</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>Marge Schmader</i>	<i>2016</i>
<i>Alycia Laureti</i>	<i>2018</i>
<i>Jeanne Warren</i>	<i>2022</i>

Welcome to the Board

JUDY ANDIDORA

Convention Treasurer

I am a life-long Catholic, currently a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Enola.

After graduating from Carbondale Area High School, I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Lehigh University and a Bachelor of Science degree from Cedar Crest College. I am a Certified Project Management Professional. I retired from Novitas where I worked in a management position for the PA Medicare Program.

My Council background includes holding office as the (past and present) President of the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish CCW and past treasurer of their Council. I currently serve as Treasurer of the Cumberland-Perry District CCW.

I reside in Mechanicsburg with my husband of 35 years. We have 2 children and 4 grandchildren.

SUZANNE LANDIS

Church Commission Co-Chair

God has blessed me with a loving family and a great Catholic education, a devoted husband, three grown sons, three granddaughters and many inspirational women who are friends and mentors.

I grew up in Philadelphia where I graduated from Little Flower High School in 1966. That summer I entered the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity where I served God and his children for twelve years. After some struggles I discerned that marriage and family was my true calling. After 41 years of marriage, I can happily say this is my vocation. Additionally, I spent 13 years teaching Religion classes to 7th and 8th graders at York Catholic High School from 1997-2010.

Currently, I am the President of the Adams County Chapter of Pennsylvanians for Human Life and the South Central Regional Director on the PA Pro-Life Federation Board, the PA President of Church Women United, and on the boards of the local Church Women United Unit and the Woman's Club of Gettysburg. I hope my background as a religious sister and a faithful member of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Gettysburg will be an asset as a member of HDCCW's Church Committee. I am pleased to be working with the dedicated and loving women of the HDCCW, especially my co-chair of the Church Committee, Brenda Wolf.

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The other National Conventions I attended were held in Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh. Anna Shepos and I drove to the one in Pittsburgh. We still joke about getting stopped by a policeman, as we were going the wrong way on a one-way street. He was so nice and helped us figure out where we were going.

Thank you for letting me share memories from my presidency. I am very honored and blessed to have been in leadership roles in the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

--Susan Merfa, HDCCW Historian



A Christmas Prayer

Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infant's cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in its radiance.

Be with us as we sing the ironies of Christmas, the incomprehensible comprehended, the poetry made hard fact, the helpless Babe who cracks the world asunder. We kneel before you shepherds, innkeepers, wise men. Help us to rise bigger than we are. Amen.

-Catholic Online

Around the Diocese

Northern District's Christine Hartley of the CCW at Saint Joseph Church in Berwick submitted this interview with **Sister Michael Jean** of the order of the



the *Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy*. Sister Michael Jean's vocation has lasted 42 years with 38 of those years serving as a teacher.

How long have you been associated with your current parish?

22 years

When did you become aware of your vocation?

When I was in my early twenties

Was your faith formation influenced by your family when you were younger?

My mother's family was a group of strong believers who attended services regularly and sent me to Catholic school.

What aspect of your parish faith community inspires you?

The parishioners are a welcoming, warm-hearted family. They are generous in giving of their time, talent, and money to support and meet the needs of the Church.

Do you have a favorite saint? Why does their faith journey inspire you?

From her earliest youth, Mary had a passionate desire to please God. Quietly, she did all the ordinary activities of a wife and mother with extraordinary love and devotion. The Blessed Mother is an inspiration to me because she trusted all days in every possible way.

Do you have a favorite gospel parable? Why does it speak to you?

My favorite passage is the Prodigal Son. It speaks to me of the unlimited Mercy of God. It pronounces that God **waits** for us lovingly and anxiously to return to Him after we have stumbled and fallen into sin.

How can we enhance our devotion to Our Blessed Mother?

We can enhance our devotion by thanking God for Mary and remembering that she said "Yes" to all that was asked of her.

What role does your parish CCW fill at your parish, and how has council been helpful to you?

I believe that, through their prayers and good works, they are a catalyst for good in promoting fellowship in the community of believers. They inspire me with their joyful and faith-filled spirit of service. For I truly believe we **all** have one overriding vocation in life...and that is to give "glory to God."



PART II WITH TINA KOWALSKI

We continue the article from Issue #1 submitted by Dauphin District's Linda Melenchek where she interviewed **Tina Kowalski**, founder of the faith and fitness exercise ministry called *SHINE*.

Was your faith formation influenced by your family when you were younger?

My parents Cheryl and Vince, married 53 years, have been a great influence on my faith formation. I can remember attending Sunday morning Mass, Holy Days of Obligation, and Stations of the Cross during Lent. We participated in parish events like summer festival and

flea markets. I have three siblings, and we would gather on Sunday nights to pray the rosary with my parents. I can remember my mom teaching me the rosary and telling me to slow down, pray it slow and think about the mysteries. As I grew, my parents continued to reinforce my faith. The foundation they created really helped to draw me back and keep me active.

What aspect of your parish faith community inspires you?

There was a day I looked around my parish and realized that I knew very few people. That was before my healing and getting involved in the parish and ministries. I look around my parish now and know a majority of the people. It's a beautiful gift to have a parish family.

Do you have a favorite saint? Why does their faith journey inspire you?

I have grown a great devotion to The Divine Mercy Chaplet from my time in Adoration. Two favorites are Saint Pope John Paul II and Saint Faustina Kowalska, the Mercy saints associated with it. I admire their devotion to Eucharistic Adoration and the way in which they served the Lord, committing themselves to spreading the message of Divine Mercy.



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I also love Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta. I love her simple, but powerful, messages of love, smiles, and being non-judgmental. Talk to someone as though they were the only person to exist. When people question your motives or kindness, do it anyway! I work at the Hospital in Catholic Services and visit Catholic patients. I pray at the tabernacle before visiting them, and invite Mother Teresa to enter the rooms with me.

Do you have a favorite gospel parable? Why does it speak to you?

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11 - 32) is one favorite. I am captivated by the reunion of father and his son.

That incredible moment of love, forgiveness, and welcome just fills me up!



Thanking God for the healing embrace and graces He has given me, I want to bring that message of acceptance, love, kindness, compassion and joy into all ministries, classes, and hospital interactions I'm involved in.

How can we enhance our devotion to Our Blessed Mother?

After my healing, one of the first programs I participated in at our Parish was 33 Days to Morning Glory. It was fantastic, and I recommend it to anyone who wants to grow in their devotion to the Blessed Mother. After this program, I began praying the rosary more frequently and seeking her counsel. I have a beautiful rosary booklet with meditations on the mysteries and gorgeous pictures.

If you have limited time, go for quality of prayer, over quantity. Slow down and listen to what Jesus wants to share with you through Our Blessed Mother.

From the Editors

AWARENESS DAYS

December

December 4

National Cookie Day

December 25

Christmas Day



December 26

Thank You Note Day

January

Human Trafficking Month

January 1

New Year's Day

January 16-22

Happiness Week

February

American Heart Month

February 4

Wear Red Day

February 14

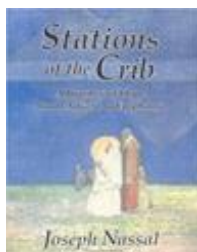
Valentine's Day



Stations of the Crib

Wednesday evenings at 7:00

Join us during Advent as we
prepare for the Nativity.



The new Zoom link will start Wednesday, December 14th.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85376898046?pwd=OG55a3RUekVWNDdJU2ZlWFVmRotsdz09>

Meeting ID: 853 7689 8046

Passcode: 301620

Join by Phone: 1.301.715.8592

(Meeting ID and Passcode listed above)



Merry Christmas from the staff of HDCCW Happenings

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