

# The Episcopal Church Women of The Diocese of New Jersey

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Greetings to the 234<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey from the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese!

The past year has brought successes and challenges as well as sorrow. Through it all, we've tried to keep our focus on God, to discern his plan for our work. The support of the Diocese and our Bishop, the Right Reverend William H. Stokes, has been deeply appreciated as we strive to grow in active members and in ministry.

We acknowledge with sadness the loss of three Diocesan ECW leaders since last convention: Pauline Chandler, president of the New Brunswick District ECW, Charlotte Baker, former Diocesan ECW Board member, and Nancy Sullivan, president of the Burlington District ECW. We mourn their passing as we celebrate the lives of these remarkable women, true saints of our church. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

The year has also brought the joy of new board members and members filling new roles. Andrea John has accepted the position of Trenton District ECW president; Susan Stokes has joined as member at large, and Rosa Pena has joined the Diocesan ECW Board as liaison to the Hispanic communities. Also, from her installation at our last Annual Meeting in May 2017, Allie Graham has assumed the role of Worship and Spiritual Development Chair and has been doing an outstanding job in that position. She organized and ran a prayer retreat in September, with Canon Connie White as presenter, which was incredibly successful, so much so that Allie has scheduled a Lenten Prayer Retreat for next month, on March 17, 2018, at St. David's in Cranbury. Join us for a spirit-filled and refreshing addition to your Lent.

For the first time, our ECW participated in the Baccalaureate Service, held in May, and presented Student Service Awards to our recipients in attendance. We will be there again this year to honor the outstanding youth of our Diocese. That service is on May 20, 2018, a day after our Annual Meeting and UTO Ingathering, which is scheduled for May 19, 2018. We look forward to returning to Grace-St. Paul in Hamilton Square, where the ECW and Mother Amy Cornell made us very welcome last year.

We also had our very well planned and well attended Seventh Triannual Women of Honor Luncheon in October, honoring outstanding women from over forty parishes. Board member Stefanie Rotsaert once again planned and chaired this wonderful event.

We are continuing our outreach to underrepresented communities in our Diocese as well as to youth, an effort led by our Youth Chair, Morgan Razo.. We hope to assist with Diocesan Youth and Young Adult events, especially now that we are without a full-time Youth and Young Adult Missioner. We're increasing the extent to which our materials are translated to Spanish and hope to add other languages as needed. We also are continuing our support of Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples. We are proud to have as the speaker at the WC/ECW Breakfast, Liza Minno-Bloom, to educate us in this area. We also are providing financial support through our mission outreach to Thistle Farms, which helps women survivors of human trafficking, and MOMS, which stands for Midwives on Missions of Service, whose mission is to improve maternal and infant mortality through education and service.

The Student Service Award application for 2018 is available now, both on the Diocesan website and at our convention table. We ask each parish and district to consider sending a donation to support this worthy program.

We will seek to introduce from the floor of convention a resolution naming the third Sunday in September each year “ECW Sunday.” We will be asking parishes to show their support of our work through prayer, awareness, and yes, financial support.

We are looking forward to Triennial, which is the national gathering of Episcopal Church Women, which takes place at the same time as General Convention. Our delegates are Donna Freidel, Joanne Hutchison, Carol Council, and Allie Graham, with Susan Stokes as alternate. During Triennial, Carol Council, immediate past Diocesan ECW president, will be honored as our Diocese’s Distinguished Woman.

We thank everyone for their support and prayers.

**Blessings,**

**Donna Freidel, ECW Board President**