

145th Annual Meeting

Episcopal Church Women in Connecticut

May 7, 2026



UPLIFTING WOMEN

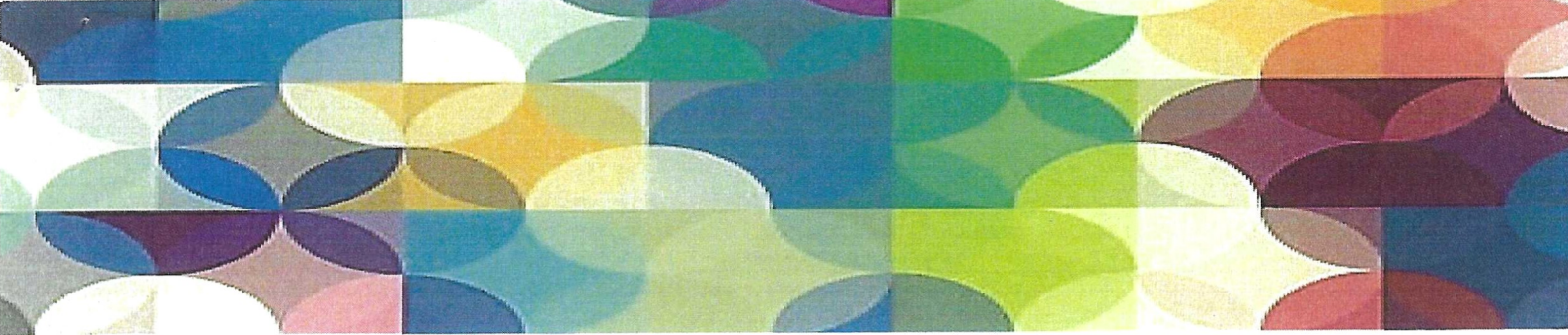


EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN IN CONNECTICUT

Welcome to the 145th Episcopal Church Women in Connecticut Annual Meeting.
A day to rejoice in God's Glory and give Praise and Thanksgiving to all the glorious
Women's Ministries that come here together today to Celebrate.

AGENDA

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 9:00 a.m. | Guest Registration |
| 10:00 a.m. | Welcome
<i>Dr. Paulette Blythe Russell, ECW CT President</i>
The Holy Eucharist
<i>The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey W. Mello, Celebrant</i>
<i>The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens, Homily</i> |
| 11:15 a.m. | Business Meeting - Introductions
<i>Dr. Paulette Blythe Russell, ECW CT President</i>
ECW CT President's Report
<i>Dr. Paulette Blythe Russell, ECW CT President</i>
ECW CT Secretary's Report
<i>Dr. Geraldine McHugh-Williams, ECW CT Secretary</i>
ECW CT Treasurer's Report
<i>Julia Johnson-Roy, ECW CT Treasurer</i>
ECW Honored Women Presentations
<i>Denise Cain Welsh, ECW CT Vice President</i>
Adjourn Business Meeting
<i>Dr. Paulette Blythe Russell, ECW CT President</i> |
| 12:15 p.m. | Introduction of Guest Speaker
<i>Dr. Paulette Blythe Russell, ECW CT President</i>
<i>Kenneasha Sloley, Guest Speaker</i> |
| 12:45 p.m. | Luncheon/Grace
<i>The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey W. Mello</i> |
| 3:00 p.m. | Benediction
<i>The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens, Homily</i> |



who
WE are

Episcopal Church Women Prayer

Almighty God, bless, we pray, our work in mission and ministry in the world; and make us so thankful for the previous gift to us of your beloved Son, that we may pray fervently, labor diligently, and give liberally to make known throughout the world the redeeming love of our Savior. Amen

We are all women of the Episcopal Church; rooted in the past and growing into God's Future.

Mission

ECW exists to support all women in their Mission and Ministry in the World.

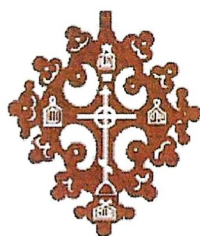
Vision

For all Women of the Episcopal Church to become a vibrant blend of all ages, coming together as a peacemaking, healing part of the church. To aspire to be a God spark, shining and sharing the love of Christ.

Goals

To encourage familiarity with and participation in the programs of Episcopal Church Women.

The structure of Episcopal Church Women has its roots in the local congregations. Each level makes its own unique contribution to the mission and ministry of women through local congregations, diocesan ECW Boards, Provincial ECW, and National Board of ECW.



Episcopal Church Women in Connecticut The First Hundred Years

- 1880 Mrs. John Binney of Middletown met with Bishop John Williams to suggest the establishment of a Connecticut Branch of the Women's Auxiliary, Bishop Williams agreed. Bishop Williams appointed Mrs. Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt of Hartford as the first president and Mrs. Harriette Giraud of Middletown as the first Vice-President. The Connecticut Branch of the Women's Auxiliary held its first organizational meeting in April of 1880 in the Chapel of Christ Church, Hartford. Bishop Williams appointed the officers and managers for the six archdeaconries. The constitution was adopted.
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- 1881 Connecticut's first Annual Meeting was held April 21, 1881, at Trinity Church in New Haven.
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- 1886 Connecticut by-laws were adopted on May 19, 1886. The monthly "Auxiliary Envelopes" pledge system was constituted for parishes. Now known as the "White Envelopes."
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- 1893 First mention of the United Thank Offering in the Annual Report.
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- 1910 Approved the Articles of Incorporation making the Connecticut branch of the Women's Auxiliary a legal entity in Connecticut and the Diocese on May 23, 1910.
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- 1925 Constitution and By-Laws were revised to allow for the election of officers rather than their appointment by the bishop. The first election of officers was held in 1926.
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- 1937 Dr. and Mrs. Clifton Brewer gave Miss Jennie Loomis of Windsor (6th president) a gavel made of olive wood from Jerusalem. This gavel became an instrument of order and has been handed down to each succeeding president.
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- 1943 Miss Pardee was elected the first President of Connecticut Council of Church Women, now known as Church Women United.
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- 1946 Miss Pardee received an award of merit...the silver cross known as the President's Cross. The cross is now worn by each succeeding president.
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- 1952 The first Women's Auxiliary Report to the Diocesan Convention was made by Mrs. Florence Plant (9th President)
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- 1958 The Triennial Meeting by-laws were adopted forming Episcopal Church Women, Episcopal Church, USA. Subsequently, designating diocesan groups to be known as the Episcopal Church Women.
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- 1960 Name changed to Episcopal Church Women of Connecticut during 1960 Annual Meeting.
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- 1965 Change in Constitution of the Diocese of Connecticut allowed women to be delegates to the Diocesan Convention.
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- 1967 The Diocesan Board was reorganized, and the archdeaconry system was eliminated.
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- 1978 Mrs. Robert A. Robinson (13th president) elected President of Province I ECW.
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- 1980 The One Hundred Year Anniversary involved a yearlong celebration with participation from every parish. The celebration culminated in a special Annual Meeting on May 8, 1980, with a skit outlining the challenges and determination of the founding members and heartened by the singing of the same hymns sang during the very first missionary meeting in 1880.
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Bibliography

Robinson, Ann Harding, D. Litt. *Morning Glories and Evensong: A Century of the Episcopal Church Women in Connecticut*. Hartford: Church Missions Publishing Co., 1981.

Burr, Nelson R. *The Story of the Diocese of Connecticut*. Hartford: Church Missions Publishing Co., 1962.

Episcopal Churchwomen - The First 150 Years; Website <https://ecwnational.org/the-episcopal-churchwomen-the-first-150-years>



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Episcopal Church Women (ECW) President's Message

Uplifting Women in Christ's Ministry: The Impact of ECW

The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) continues to carry out its mission of Uplifting women in fulfilling Christ's ministry throughout Connecticut and the wider community. Our vision is to cultivate a dynamic coalition of women from all ages and backgrounds, uniting as a force of peace, healing, and service within the Church.

As I embark on the second year of my journey as President of the ECW for Connecticut, I am even more aware of the job entrusted to us as a group of Christian women in a world where change is constant and the need to serve is great. I recognize that the work ahead is substantial, but also filled with promise. We must work collaboratively to expand ECW membership throughout the State of Connecticut.

Our vision continues to be inclusive, reaching all six regions: Northwest Region, Northeast Region, North Central Region, Southeast Region, and Southwest Region. By broadening our reach, we can strengthen our network and build a more inclusive community that reflects the richness of our Episcopal tradition.

Last year we honored 15 women but all the 6 Regions were not represented. As such we can proudly declare as a group that today we have met the goal to have at least one parish represented at our Annual Meeting from all six regions. Today we are honoring 10 women with at least one from each of our six regions. Extraordinary women whose faith is steadfast, whose service is selfless, and whose impact is deeply woven into the life of their parishes and communities. These honorees represent the very heart of the Episcopal Church Women: resilient, compassionate, and committed to advancing Christ's ministry in both visible and unseen ways. They are mentors, caregivers, leaders, and quiet servants who give generously of their time,

talent, and spirit. In lifting them up today, we not only recognize their individual contributions, but we also affirm the collective strength and sacred calling of women who continue to shape and sustain our Church.

I firmly believe that when we work together, we can achieve extraordinary results. My guiding philosophy remains: **“Whatever the mind conceives, we can achieve.”** With this growth mindset, the sky is truly our limit.

We should therefore continue the recognition of long-serving women in our churches. Through this initiative, we honor the dedication of women who have contributed so much to our churches and strengthen our network by inviting more women to join our mission. A tradition we plan to continue under the present board and hope this will encourage other parishes who did not submit a nomination this year will consider doing so next year. Let us continue to celebrate our hard working well deserved unsung heroes who work tirelessly without seeking any compensation for their dedication. Women such as the late Betty Silva, our immediate past-president who served this organization for many years. On April 17th our organization and the Church community lost a dedicated and faithful leader.

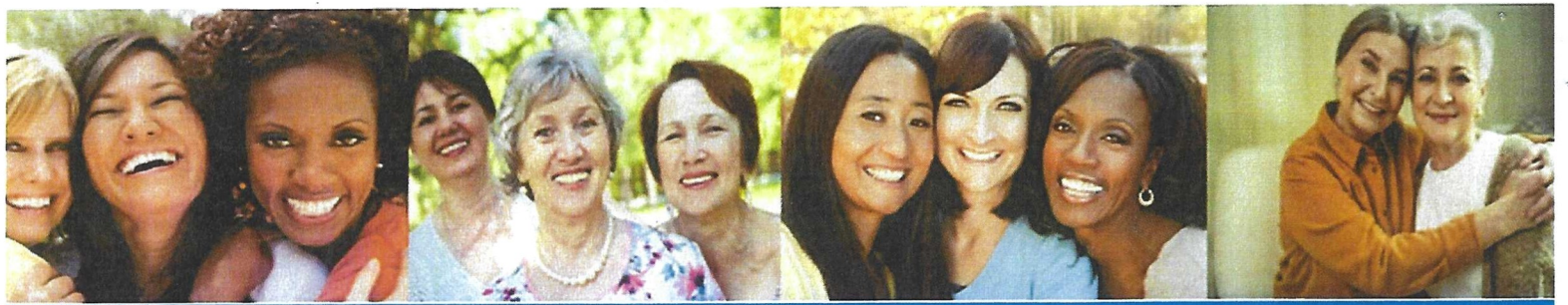
The Executive Board continues to welcome your ideas, suggestions, and recommendations to increase our membership and encourage broader Church participation in the ECW. By sharing your insights and working together, we can develop innovative ways to engage our communities and inspire more women to join our mission.

Let us join our hands and hearts together to continue Uplifting Women to ensure the success and the continued growth of the ECW throughout Connecticut.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Paulette Blythe-Russell
ECW President

TREASURER'S REPORT

	<u>Jan - Dec 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
INCOME		
DESIGNATED/RESTRICTED INCOME		
Clergy Daughter	0.00	2,874.62
Diocesan Library	0.00	1,947.15
UTO	0.00	1,238.00
Missionary Educations	0.00	1,103.28
Camp Washington	0.00	2,301.73
Special Assistance	0.00	673.01
Campus Ministry	0.00	167.85
Total DESIGNATED/RESTRICTED INCOME	0.00	10,305.64
UNRESTRICTED INCOME		
Unrestricted Grant Income	94,963.51	86,893.46
Total UNRESTRICTED INCOME	94,963.51	86,893.46
OTHER INCOME-DONATIONS/DUES		
ECW Parish Group Dues	200.00	0.00
Annual Contributions	0.00	0.00
White Envelope Donations	25.00	0.00
UTO Donations	0.00	0.00
Annual Meeting Registrations	6,125.00	0.00
Other Designated Gifts	1,083.00	0.00
Interest Income		
Endowment	0.00	0.00
Bank Of America	82.00	0.00
Total Interest Income	82.00	0.00
Total OTHER INCOME-DONATIONS/DUES	7,515.00	0.00
Total INCOME	102,478.51	97,199.10
Total Income	102,478.51	97,199.10
Expense		
EXPENSES		
GRANTS GIFTS & SCHOLARSHIPS		
UTO Gift-Bessie Franklin Fund	0.00	1,238.00
Special Assistance	1,500.00	1,500.00
Social Concerns Gifts	0.00	2,500.00
Clergy Daughter Scholarships	2,000.00	2,874.62
Diocesan Library Books	1,947.15	1,947.15
Scholarship in Missionary Field	0.00	1,103.28
Camp Washington Scholarships	2,301.73	2,301.73
Campus Ministry Grant	167.85	167.85
Girls Friendly Society	1,117.00	1,117.00
White Envelope Grants	0.00	1,000.00
Other Grants	14,500.00	14,250.37
Total GRANTS GIFTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	23,533.73	30,000.00



**Episcopal Church Women in Connecticut
145th Annual Meeting Honored Women Recipients**

NOMINEES

North Central Region

Kathie Rovetti, Grace Church Hartford

Monica McDonald, St. Martin's Episcopal, Hartford

Tonya Brathwaite, St. Stephen's, Bloomfield

South Central Region

Valarie Stanley, St. Luke's, New Haven

Wendy Ciaburri, St. Peter's, Cheshire

Southwest Region

Pam Williams, St. John's, Bridgeport

Northwest Region

Marty Johnson, St. Andrew's, Kent

**Laurie Parsons, St. Paul's with Christ Church Chapel,
Bantam & Bethlehem**

Northeast Region

Marie Dixon, St. James', Glastonbury

Southeast Region

Ellen Pfarr, St. John's, Essex

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Kathie Rovetti

Parish: Grace Hartford

Region : North Central

Kathie Rovetti exemplifies the mission and values of ECW through her faithful service. A former music educator, Kathie dedicated her professional life to nurturing creativity, discipline, and confidence in her students. In retirement, she continued this vocation of care by turning her attention to a vital ministry of service.

In 2006, she began volunteering at the A Place of Grace food pantry at Grace Episcopal Church Hartford alongside her husband, Peter, offering a presence marked by warmth, attentiveness, and genuine compassion. Following Peter's death in 2010, Kathie continued this ministry with remarkable resilience and purpose.

In 2014, she became co-director of the pantry, and in 2020, she assumed the role of sole director. Over the past five years, her leadership has guided the program into a season of remarkable growth (from ~125 families per week pre-Covid to over 300 families per week post-Covid). Under her direction, the feeding ministry has blossomed exponentially, expanding both its reach and its ability to serve neighbors with dignity, consistency, and care.

Kathie is known for her generous heart and loving spirit. Those who come to the pantry are not simply served—they are welcomed, known, and valued. Many trust her unconditionally, drawn to her quiet, steady and compassionate presence. Her commitment is evident in her tireless work ethic, often arriving as early as 7:00 a.m. to prepare for the day's ministry well before the first neighbor arrives.

Her service extends throughout the life of the parish. Kathie is a long-serving clerk of the vestry, offering faithful leadership and continuity. She is also an active member of the choir and shares her musical gifts with the youth program, continuing her lifelong calling as an educator and mentor.

Beyond her many roles, Kathie is a devoted mother and grandmother, beloved for the warmth she brings to both family and community life—perhaps most famously through her Super Bowl lasagna, a simple but meaningful expression of her generous hospitality.

Kathie embodies servant leadership in its truest form: humble, consistent, and deeply rooted in love for others. Through her work, she has cultivated a community where all are treated with dignity and care. She is most worthy of recognition as an Honored Woman, and we give thanks for her enduring witness of compassion, leadership, and grace.

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Monica McDonald

Parish: St Martin's Hartford

Region: North Central

Monica McDonald, APRN, serves as the Program Director of the highly successful Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) Program at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, a ministry designated as a Jubilee Program by the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. Under her

exceptional leadership, vision, and compassionate care, the program has graduated over 600 students, equipping them with the skills and confidence to serve in the healthcare field.

What makes Ms. McDonald's work truly remarkable is her unwavering commitment to service. She has generously given of her time and professional expertise to ensure the program's success, opening doors of opportunity for individuals from diverse backgrounds. Through her guidance, many who once faced barriers now step forward into meaningful and productive careers, becoming vital contributors to our community.

Ms. McDonald often shares that her greatest reward is witnessing students, men and women of all ages and backgrounds walk across the stage toward a new beginning. Her selfless dedication has helped transform lives. Many program graduates are now gainfully employed, and a significant number have advanced even further in the medical field, becoming Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

Beyond her professional achievements, Ms. McDonald is a devoted mother and grandmother, cherished for the warmth, compassion, and joy she brings to both her family and the wider community.

For her extraordinary leadership, her commitment to empowering others, and her faithful service, we proudly and wholeheartedly nominate Ms. Monica McDonald for the ECW Lifetime Award.

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Tonya Brathwaite

Parish: St Stephen's Bloomfield

Region: North Central

Tonya has made a remarkable impact on St. Stephen's Church community in Bloomfield, Ct. She has made a remarkable impact on our church's outreach by single-handedly creating and maintaining our church website and YouTube channel, ensuring that both are consistently up to date with the latest information, announcements, and spiritual content. Her dedication to keeping our congregation informed and

connected, especially in today's digital world, has been invaluable.

Beyond her digital ministry, she is one of the driving forces behind our fundraising efforts. She plays a key role in organizing our church tag sale and has thoughtfully designed spiritual tee shirts, the sales of which benefit the church. Her creativity and commitment to these initiatives reflect a deep desire to support and strengthen our church community.

She has also been a faithful member of our choir and is now taking the initiative to revitalize it, a ministry that has been dormant since the COVID pandemic. Her vision and enthusiasm for restoring this beloved tradition speak volumes about her heart for worship.

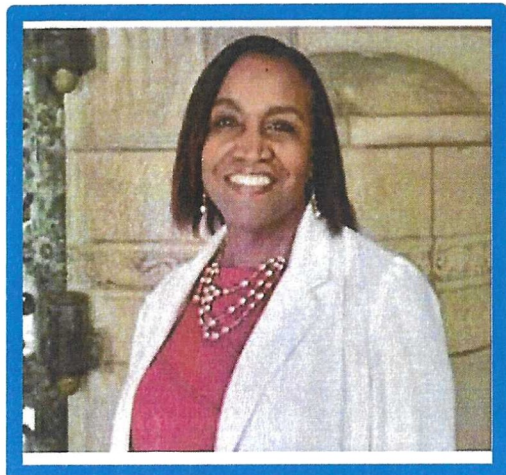
Above all, she is a steadfast and faithful parishioner who attends and tithes regularly, and who is always willing to step in wherever she is needed. Her servant's heart, her talents, and her unwavering dedication are a true blessing to St. Stephen's Church.

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026

Valarie Stanley

Parish: St Luke's New Haven

Region: South Central



Valarie Stanley retired from Yale University on December 31, 2021, after 47 years. Her last position there was Senior Director of Institutional Equity and Accessibility and the Senior Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Faculty and Staff at Yale. In addition to these roles, she was also the university's ADA Coordinator, 504 Coordinator,

and Age Discrimination Coordinator. Valarie served on the Provost's Advisory Committee on Accessibility Resources, the Title IX Steering Committee, the Yale University Campus Resource Team (Yale CRT). She also served on the Yale Veterans Network Steering Committee, the Yale Latino Network Steering Committee, and the Divers Ability at Yale Steering Committee. Valarie was also a primary resource for students who have concerns about any kind of discrimination and/or harassment.

Valarie served as Senior Warden at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in New Haven from January 29, 2017, until March 1, 2026. During her tenure she also served as Chair Personnel and the Budget Committee, Safe Church Coordinator, lector, and lay delegate at St. Luke's. In December of 2021 she was named Woman of the Year by her Church. She was a member of the Episcopal Church Women, former President of members of St. Luke's Network Guild, and a former member of the Chancel Choir. She is also active on a diocesan level having served or currently serving in several different leadership roles in the Episcopal Church of Connecticut (ECCT) including the Mission Council, the ECCT Finance Committee, the Core Team of the Racial Healing, Justice & Reconciliation Ministry Network, the Reparations Task Force, and the Bishop's Transition Committee's Liturgy Sub-Committee, the ECCT Homegrown Antiracism Training Committee, the ECCT Hiring Process Committee, Cathedral Chapter, and the Clergy Compensation Working Group. Valarie also sat on the Board of Governors of the Episcopal Church at Yale (ECY). Valarie is a trained and licensed lay worship leader and regularly lead Morning Prayer at St. Luke's. She is a member of Tau Pi Phi National Honor Society in Accounting, Business and Economics and is a graduate of Albertus Magnus College in New Haven. Valarie lives in Windsor, Connecticut. Currently her greatest joy is being a full-time granny nanny!

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Wendy Ciaburri

Parish: St Peter's Cheshire

Region: South Central

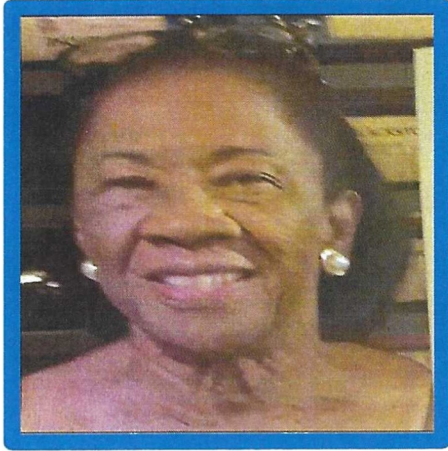
Wendy Ciaburri has been a beloved member of St. Peter's in Cheshire for more than 35 years. She oversees the Hospitality Committee, providing food, drink, and a welcoming atmosphere for coffee hour, special events, visits from important guests, memorial services, and more.

Wendy also runs our yearly Pumpkin Patch Sale. For a month or more, she brings together so many members of the community for this fundraising project. The high school softball team, the Best Buddies club members, and members of other local organizations join the St. Peter's crew to carry pumpkins, sell pumpkins, and help out with the "Kids Day in the Patch" event. The money raised helps to support multiple groups, including the organization that grows the pumpkins, staffed 100% by Native Americans.

Along with these important projects, Wendy manages the Christmas Bazaar and the Nearly New Boutique. She is a Vestry Member, a Godly Play teacher, a member of the Outreach Committee, a member of the Active Hope Eco-Justice Council, a Boulder Knoll garden worker and our Chapel on the Green (New Haven) coordinator.

Wendy works tirelessly with warmth, kindness, generosity, and grace. She is quick to show her appreciation and offer a hug. In her work, she supports St. Peter's while also supporting and making connections with the wider community.

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Pam Williams

Parish: St John's Bridgeport

Region: Southwest

Pam exemplifies the true meaning of a "Good and Faithful Servant". She has been a faithful and loyal member of the St. John's Bridgeport ECW for over 35 years and in that time has served in various capacities.

Without her strong and dedicated leadership, we could not achieve the level of success we've had within the ECW and our events. She leads from the heart, and lends generously of her time, talent and treasure. She is the first to bring ideas for events, and not only makes suggestions, but takes on the responsibility of bringing out the best outcomes in everything she does and she encourages everyone to participate to make the ECW the organization that it is today.

She is recognized by everyone for the tremendous efforts she pours into every detail, for her relentless contributions and her unwavering generosity to the ECW. Her dedication is unmatched; she's not just an ECW member of St. John's Bridgeport ; she is an Ambassador to this amazing organization and we are truly Blessed to have her in our ministry.

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026

Marty Johnson

Parish: St Andrew's Kent

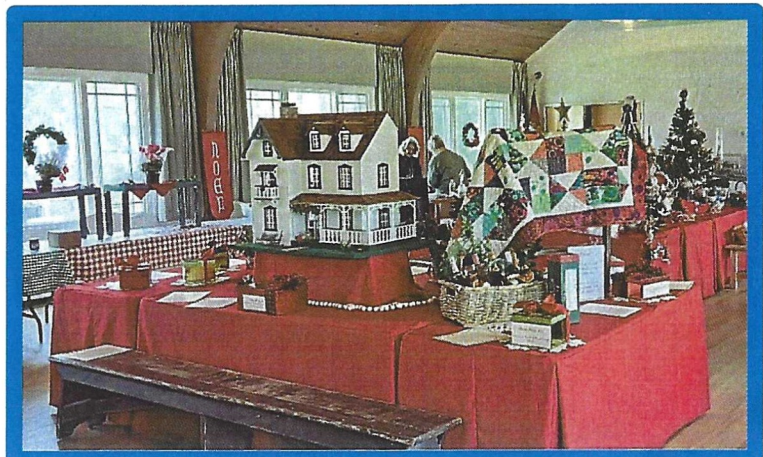
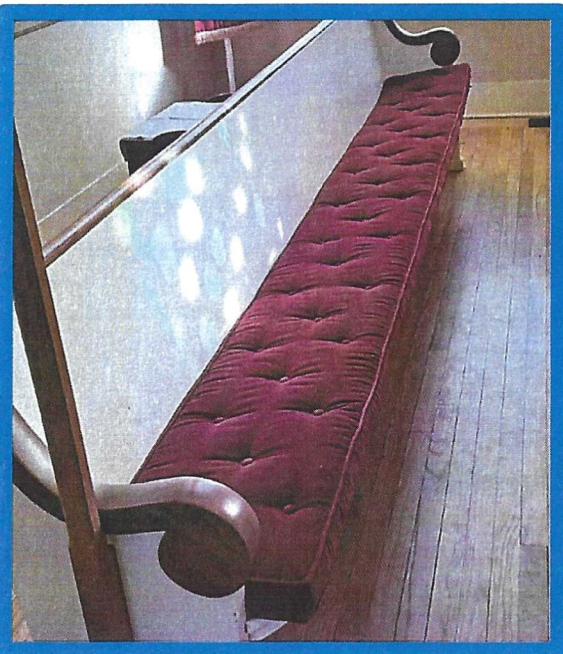
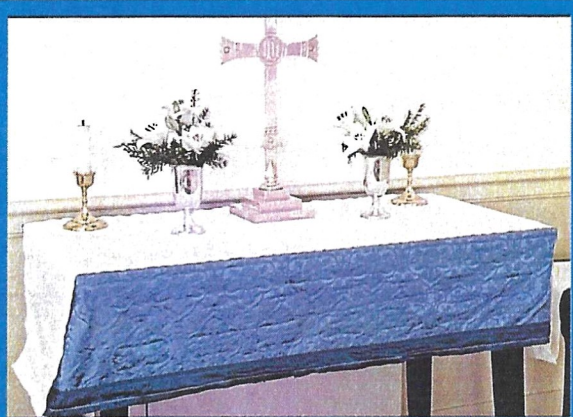
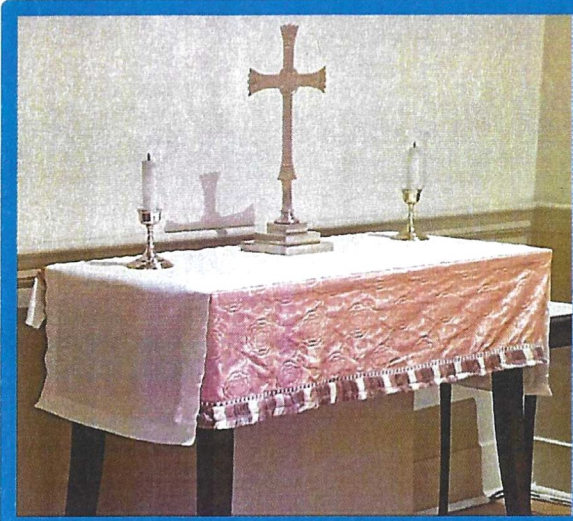
Region: Northwest

Marty may skillfully avoid the camera, but her accomplishments speak clearly and shine brightly.

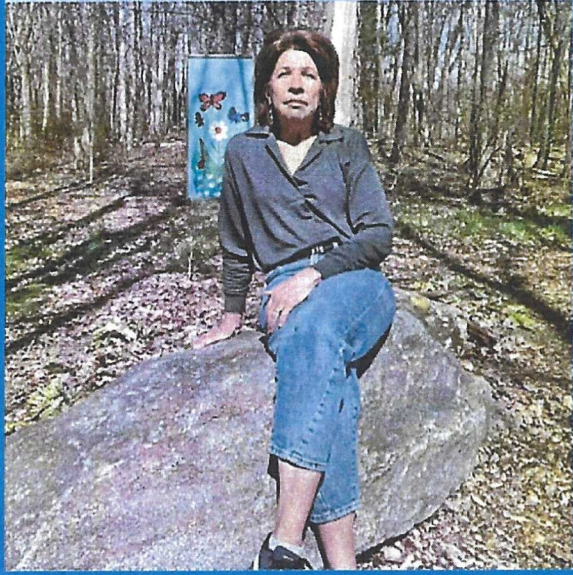
A faithful member of St. Andrew's for over 20 years, Marty has long served the parish with quiet dedication. She is a committed member of the Altar Guild especially during the demands of Holy Week, when all who serve deserve special recognition and she has also faithfully served, and continues to serve, on the Vestry.

It is, however, Marty's remarkable gift with the needle that stands out most. A professional seamstress, she has lovingly created the pew cushions throughout our church complete with 1,500 covered buttons along with fitted table coverings for our Christmas Bazaar, rose orphreys for our Lenten and Advent frontals, superfrontals for the full liturgical year (including Gaudete and Laetare Sundays), and seasonal missal cushions.

Marty carries out all of this work with humility without fanfare, without drama, and until now, with little recognition. It is our hope that this award will affirm what we have long known: her faithful and beautiful work has been seen, valued, and deeply appreciated.



HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Laurie Parsons

Parish: St Paul's with Christ Church Chapel
Region: Northwest

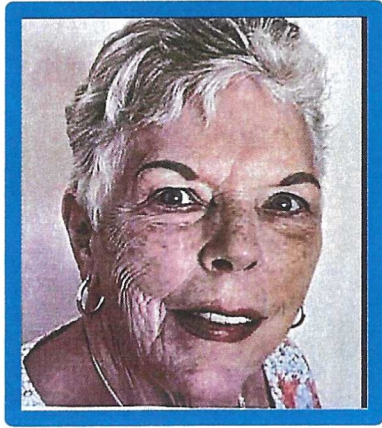
We at the newly-merged parish of St. Paul's Church with Christ Church Chapel are proud to nominate Laurie Parsons. Laurie is a long-time member of the parish and has always been an active parishioner. She has been a member of our vestry and has also served as Junior Warden. At this time, she is our Pastoral Care

Coordinator and is attentive to those who are sick or homebound, new members of the parish, or anyone in need of a smile to brighten the day. She is involved with our fundraising efforts, including spearheading the ever-popular annual Trivia Night, and can always be depended on to help as an usher, counter, or coffee hour host. She never says no to anyone who needs a helping hand.

Laurie is also spearheading the new and innovative ministry that is our Healing Path, located in the nearly four acres of woods that are part of the parish's property. It serves as a tranquil and quiet place to walk and pray. Last year, we hung handcrafted, beautifully-decorated birdhouses painted by the children in the parish and those young at heart to provide inviting habitat for the many species of birds in our area. This year, we hope to plant perennials, bulbs, and flowering bushes to attract bees, butterflies, and other pollinators to the area. We recently had inspirational plaques made to be placed along the Path for reflection and contemplation. We will also add benches as comfortable places to sit and listen, watch, read, or pray. Her tenacity and dedication are unending, and she has applied for several grants to defray the costs for this ambitious ministry to benefit the wider community.

Congratulations, Laurie!

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Marie Dixon

Parish: St James' Glastonbury

Region: Northeast

Marie Dixon uses her God-given gifts to give back to others. Her most impactful ministry is Carol's Closet Paper Pantry, a program that provides paper products and personal care items for Glastonbury residents in need. Imagine planning an event every month for 11 consecutive years without a break? That is the

commitment Marie Dixon made to run Carol's Closet out of St. James' from 2015-2025. Thanks to Marie's leadership over the past 11 years, 55,000 items were given out to over 14,000 people. In 2025, Carol's Closet served an average of 88 people per month, that benefited 138 people per month.

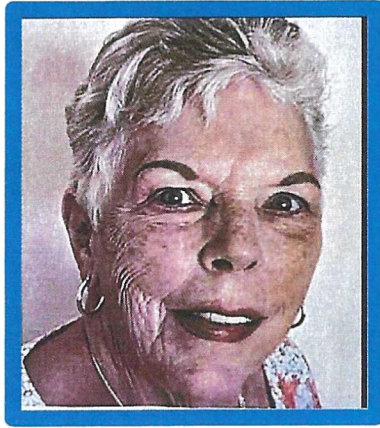
As leader of this ministry, Marie organizes communication with the clients and 20 + volunteers, the publicity fresh. Over the years, Marie significantly expanded the volunteer effort. Five churches of various denominations within the Glastonbury Community now volunteer and collect donations.

Marie loves interacting with the clients who return each month. "The clients and volunteers have become a family. Last month a long-time client came in and shared that her husband had died that week. All the volunteers gathered around to comfort her and pray for her."

When Marie was ready to relinquish her role, she nurtured a new leader, ensuring the future of this ministry. In November of 2025 she passed the leadership on to Lisa Gleason. Lisa says, "Marie didn't just 'hand over the keys', she took me in and over months showed me her processes for ordering supplies, tracking inventory and expenses, acknowledging donors, banking, pre-distribution day set-up, working with volunteers ...oh and how to turn on the lights in the church." Marie still volunteers each month.

Carol's Closet is not Marie's only ministry. Another one of her ministries highlights her commitment to prayer. Over the past 5 years, she has organized the Pocket Shawl Ministry. It is with much love that Marie ran Carol's Closet, and with that same love that she continues her involvement spreading God's love in the world. As one volunteer summed up the way many feel about Marie. "I am grateful for her ongoing support, but more importantly, I treasure her friendship. She is a beautiful person that I am blessed to have in my life."

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Marie Dixon

Parish: St James' Glastonbury

Region: Northeast

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Marie loves interacting with the clients who return each month. "The clients and volunteers have become a family. Last month a long-time client came in and shared that her husband had died that week. All the volunteers gathered around to comfort her and pray for her."

When Marie was ready to relinquish her role, she nurtured a new leader, ensuring the future of this ministry. In November of 2025 she passed the leadership on to Lisa Gleason. Lisa says, "Marie didn't just 'hand over the keys', she took me in and over months showed me her processes for ordering supplies, tracking inventory and expenses, acknowledging donors, banking, pre-distribution day set-up, working with volunteers ...oh and how to turn on the lights in the church." Marie still volunteers each month.

Carol's Closet is not Marie's only ministry. Another one of her ministries highlights her commitment to prayer. Over the past 5 years, she has organized the Pocket Shawl Ministry. It is with much love that Marie ran Carol's Closet, and with that same love that she continues her involvement spreading God's love in the world. As one volunteer summed up the way many feel about Marie. "I am grateful for her ongoing support, but more importantly, I treasure her friendship. She is a beautiful person that I am blessed to have in my life."

HONORED WOMEN RECIPIENT 2026



Ellen Pfarr

Parish: St. John's, Essex

Region: Southeast

Ellen Pfarr has been a devoted parishioner and faithful member of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut for decades. Through her quiet yet deeply committed service, she embodies the mission and values of the Episcopal Church Women.

Humble and gracious, Ellen consistently offers her gifts in service to others without seeking recognition or praise. Ellen has built a distinguished career as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and therapist, with a particular passion for serving children. For ten years, she served as a clinical coordinator at a residential facility for young children, where she focused on healing their trauma and supporting their emotional well-being. Her work with Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) funded programs, including her role as a DCF social worker, placed her on the front lines of protecting vulnerable children—assessing safety, preventing harm, and advocating for their well-being. Through this work, she has profoundly impacted the lives of countless children, strengthening families and communities with compassion and care.

In addition to her professional contributions, Ellen has been a dedicated and active member of St. John's for many years. Over the years, she has led and participated in numerous ministries within our church. Most recently, she has revitalized our Coffee Hour, making a meaningful contribution to strengthening fellowship and fostering new connections within our community. Ellen is also a passionate advocate for social justice. During her free time, she can often be found standing on highway bridges, as part of an advocacy brigade, holding up signs that call for peace and justice no matter how inclement the weather.

Ellen Pfarr is the very embodiment of a humble and dedicated churchwoman. Her lifelong service—both within the church and beyond—has transformed lives and strengthened communities across our state. It is with deep gratitude and admiration that we recognize her for her enduring commitment and impact.



Welcome Guest Speaker:

Kenneasha Sloley

“Uplifting Women”

Kenneasha Sloley is a transformational educational leader who doesn't simply lead institutions she ignites transformation in people. With more than twenty-three (23) years of experience spanning over diverse environments, her

work has been anchored in one mission: dismantling inequities and unlocking the brilliance within every community she serves. She is currently pursuing her Doctor of Education at Northeastern University, embodying her belief that learning is lifelong and leadership is sacred service. She has also served as a guest lecturer at Yale University, UCONN and the University of Mount Olive bridging scholarship with lived leadership.

As Principal of a (PreK–8) in New Haven, she cultivates cultures of belonging where students flourish and educators reclaim their passion. Her leadership led the successful transformation and turnaround of Dr. Michael D. Fox School, and she contributed to elevating Guilford among Connecticut's highest-ranking districts. Yet beyond metrics and milestones, her greatest impact is helping others find their voice and the courage to use it.

As Founder and CEO of **NeXellence: Where Voice Meets Vision**, her signature Inspire–Empower–Transform framework equips leaders—particularly women—to step boldly into purpose and power. She serves as Program Director of WISE Network Inc., advisory board member at Albertus Magnus College, consultant with AlphaSights, and member of the Connecticut State Department of Education's Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities Advisory. Through her work with the National Alliance of Black School Educators and the Greater New England Alliance of Black School Educators, she continues to champion equity at regional and national levels.

Her leadership has been honored with recognition as one of the **100 Women of Color**, recipient of the prestigious **W.E.B. Du Bois Talented Tenth Award**, the Collin Bennett/Marcus Mosiah Garvey Award, and the WISE Network Inspiration Award—distinctions that reflect both excellence and impact. Alongside her parents she is the Co-Founder of The Kennedy Legacy Foundation, advancing educational opportunity in Jamaica and underserved communities, a testament to her commitment to lift as she climbs. A devoted wife and proud mother of three daughters, she leads with strength, grace, and authenticity. She is living proof that when women rise, communities transform—and when one voice is empowered, generations are changed.



Episcopal Church Women are Christian women who support the Church and each other through individual and corporate ministry by affirming and promoting the work of our Lord Jesus Christ through prayer, worship, study and action for the benefit of all. Today we give thanks to the many women who have dedicated years of service to the Episcopal Church Women Organizations, serving in many roles.

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Girls Friendly Society, Karen Rowe



The Connecticut Board of the Episcopal Church Women extends a warm and sincere thank you to everyone joining us today. A special thank you to our Bishops, Deacon, Readers, Speaker, Musician, and Girl's Friendly for the table centerpieces.

SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

Celebrant	The Right Reverend Jeffrey Mello, Bishop Diocesan, Episcopal Church in Connecticut
Preacher	The Right Reverend Laura Ahrens, Bishop Suffragan, Episcopal Church in Connecticut
Deacon	The Venerable Pat Jackson, Archdeacon serving at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Meriden and Chaplain for Retired Deacons
Lectors	Allison Fresher, St. John's Episcopal Church, Essex Olive Grant, St. John's Episcopal Church, Stamford
Psalmist	John Scott, Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford
Gospelers	
Haitian Creole	The Rev. Judith Alexis, Rector, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Southington
Spanish	The Rev. Roxana Videla, Priest Associate, St. John's, Episcopal Church, Waterbury
English	The Venerable Pat Jackson, Deacon
Intercessor	Evelyn Green, St. Monica's Episcopal Church, Hartford
Crucifer	John Scott, Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford
Musician	Lan-Ya Huang, organist, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Hartford

Go forth into the world in peace.

Be of good courage.

Hold fast that which is good. Render to no one evil for evil.

Strengthen the fainthearted.

Support the weak. Help the afflicted.

Show love to everyone.