

How to Start or Participate in a National Episcopal Church Women Group

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So, You Want to Start an ECW!

We are pleased, as your ECW National Board, to offer this packet to you as a tool to help you develop a plan to form a new ECW group or to revitalize your present one. There are as many different ways to organize as there are groups, and each group should choose a workable plan that meets their individual circumstances and needs. We have included a brief summary of the history and structure of the national organization to give you an appreciation of the impact and influence that Episcopal Church Women have had and continue to have on the life and ministry of the Church. Also, included in the packet are tips and suggestions on how to begin as well as some ideas for structuring and implementing a program for your group.

This is intended to be only a sampling – a guide and resource reference to ‘jump start’ your plans. Many Episcopal Church Women are eager to assist and advise you as you develop your group’s plan. We encourage you to call your Diocesan ECW President or your Provincial Representative. National Board members also stand ready to help in any way we can. You will find contact and other helpful information about Episcopal Church Women on our website, www.ecwnational.org.

2018-2021 ECW National Board

President – Ms. Karen O. Patterson, president@ecwnational.org

1st Vice President (Program) – Ms. Patricia Wellnitz, firstvp@ecwnational.org

2nd Vice President (Information & Communication) - The Rev. Georgene “Gigi” Conner, secondvp@ecwnational.org

Secretary - Ms. Samar Fay, secretary@ecwnational.org

Treasurer – Ms. Jeanne Plecenik, treasurer@ecwnational.org

Member at Large-Social Justice – The Rev. Ema Rosero-Nordalm, socialjustice@ecwnational.org

Province Representatives

Province I Representative - Ms. Margaret Noel, province1@ecwnational.org

Province II Representative - The Rev. Jennifer Kenna, province2@ecwnational.org

Province III Representative - Ms. Cindy Mohr, province3@ecwnational.org

Province IV Representative - Ms. Mary Beth Welch, province4@ecwnational.org

Province V Representative - Ms. Jan Goossens, province5@ecwnational.org

Province VI Representative – Ms. Lynn Fitzgibbon, province6@ecwnational.org

Province VII Representative - Ms. Lisa Bortner, province7@ecwnational.org

Province VIII Representative - Canon Martha K. Estes, province8@ecwnational.org

Province IX Representative - The Rev. Consuelo “Connie” Sanchez Navarro,
province9@ecwnational.org

We gratefully acknowledge former National Board member Janet R. Farmer for her work in preparing and producing this packet. Janet was the National Board ECW Secretary from 1997-2000 and First Vice-President from 2000-2003.

A Vision for Episcopal Church Women

VISION STATEMENT

**As the eyes, ears, hands, and heart of Christ in the world,
we will persist in the work of healing, justice, and peace.**

LIVING THE MINISTRY

To live Christ's ministry, we:

Listen to voices of women worldwide;

**Promote educational, spiritual, and social programs which minister
to women and children;**

**Provide opportunities and tools to grow relationships with God and
others through spirituality, prayer, and worship; and**

**Encourage the development of women's leadership by example in
stewardship, training, and education.**

The role of women in the Church and the world continues to change and that impacts the heart and soul of Episcopal Church Women. The Board recognized that the focus and activities would have to change to adjust to those changes.

*God, make a fresh start in me. Shape a Genesis week
from the chaos of my life.
Psalm 51:10 The Message*

History of the National Episcopal Church Women

From the Spirit of Missions, Volume XXXVII for 1872:

It is our desire as speedily as possible to bind together the various Parochial Missionary Societies already existing, to organize new ones wherever they may be desired, and, by every means within our power, to awaken deeper and more permanent interest and zeal in the Missionary work among the women of the Church.

We long to have each one feel that she, individually, has something to do for Christ and for the coming of His Kingdom, while, at the same time, we long no less to have her realize that she is working, not alone, nor simply as a member of a single parish, but as one of a great company wherein all, in their own special stations, wait and watch and labor for their Lord.

We do not seek to control or direct the labor of the Society or the offering of the individuals.

What we do seek is to quicken the Missionary spirit, and then to urge it to prompt and generous action. We want your gifts of time, of strength, of intellect, not for ourselves, but for our Master. Lastly, there are hundreds more, earnest, faithful, devoted women, who would be cheered and whose hands would be strengthened, if they could only know what is being done by their sisters in the Church, and could see their offerings, small and insignificant as they seem, increased and multiplied by union with the gifts of others.

We wish all to draw closer to each other, labor more unitedly, to give more nobly, to pray more fervently, and to follow Christ's example.

We shall be glad to hear, not only from Rectors of parishes, but any and all earnest Christian women, who are willing to give their hearts to this work, and who seek further information and direction with regard to it.

(Paraphrased from the original text.)

At the 30th General Convention, held in Baltimore in 1871, the Board of Missions was authorized to organize a Women's Society. The Emery sisters, Mary Abbott, Julia Chester, Susan Lavinia, and Margaret Theresa, were instrumental in the early organization of the Women's Auxiliary. Mary wrote to every rector asking for cooperation in appointing a correspondent from that parish to help organize an Auxiliary Missionary Society, or form a relationship with a society already active in that parish. Thus, began a continuing communication link to encourage, inform, recruit, and guide.

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The first Triennial Meeting was held in 1874 at the same time and place as the 31st General Convention. Sixty-six women from five states gathered. By the second Triennial Meeting in 1877, 48 dioceses had formally organized groups. Much of the early work of the Women's Auxiliary was to address the problem of funding women who dedicated their lives to mission work. (Thus, our reputation as fundraisers goes back to our beginnings!) From the beginning collections were taken up which led to the formation of The United Thank Offering. This effort, as well as the number of participants, grew at each Triennial Meeting. In preparation for the 1898 Triennial Meeting, 25,000 collection boxes were sent out which gathered in \$82,818.56. The increasing number of participants, almost 2000, prompted a change in 1907 in which only the officers of diocesan organizations could attend the Triennial Meeting in order to seat everyone and have manageable groups in small mission studies.

The Triennial Meeting in 1922 reflected the new concept in program and organization. A National Board had been formed to oversee the direction of the work of the women, in not only supporting missionaries, but in social service, religious education, and prayer and worship.

Prior to the 1958 Triennial Meeting, the Women's Auxiliary Executive Board became the General Division of Women's Work. The Triennial Meeting adopted the necessary bylaws which included a designation that diocesan groups would be known as Episcopal Church Women and parish groups would be known as the Women of _____. Between 1958 and 1985, the role of women in the Church went through numerous and significant changes. As women were accepted into seminaries and ordained, elected to vestries and as deputies to General Convention, and otherwise mainstreamed, the Episcopal Church Women struggled with their position in the Church. Over time, the national structure changed from being a part of the National Church structure to an independent group culminating in the creation of the National Board of the Episcopal Church Women in 1985. This Board, with minor changes, continues to function.

Helpful Tidbits

Structure of the National Episcopal Church Women

The Episcopal Church Women as an organization functions at four levels: National, Province, Diocese and Parish.

National

The National Board, which meets three times per year, is comprised of the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Member-at-Large for Social Justice and one Representative from each of the nine provinces.

The National Board does not exercise authority or control over provincial, diocesan, or parish ECW groups, but acts as the organizational entity which binds

together the women of the church. Communication between the board members and women at all levels throughout the church helps the National Board to

fulfill their stated mission – to support all women in their ministry. Specifically, the board plans the Triennial Meeting and oversees programs such as Women to Women.

Province

The Episcopal Church is comprised of nine Provinces (see enclosed map). Although they may function differently, each Province has a President and an ECW Board.

Diocese

The Episcopal Church is comprised of 111 Dioceses. Almost all of them have an ECW or a Women's Ministries Board. Again, each is unique in its structure and function.

Parish

The number of parishes in the dioceses range from 28 to almost 200. Most parishes have active Episcopal Church Women or Women's Ministries groups.

Why Women Only

It is often said that every woman in every pew is a member of ECW. If you consider yourself a woman and are a member of the Episcopal Church, then you are an Episcopal Church woman. Since you have, by obtaining this packet, expressed an interest in organizing or revitalizing women's activities in your parish, you probably understand "Why Women Only." But as women have become integrally involved in the life and work of the Church, the need for a women's group is not as readily apparent. An important **'why': women simply enjoy getting together with other women** – whether it is for fellowship, Bible study or working on a project. Another important aspect is the opportunity for women to grow into the life of the Church through women's ministries. Many of the women in leadership roles in the larger body of the Church began their involvement/ministry with the Episcopal Church Women.

Episcopal Church Women groups most importantly offer an environment for spiritual growth and opportunities for ministry. Participation in these groups also promotes an understanding of the structure and functionality of the Church.

Why Episcopal Church Women

When considering the establishment of an Episcopal Church Women group, knowing our history and understanding our structure is critical. From our beginning as the Women's Auxiliary, and following through many changes in purpose and activities, the Episcopal Church Women have played a significant role in the work of the Episcopal Church. Cherished memories of the contributions of resources - ranging from financial to missionary to training to spirituality - which women have made throughout our history are a source of satisfaction and pride for all of us.

The old stereotype of Episcopal Church Women as 'cooks' and 'fundraisers'

is fading as we move into the future with new ideas, relevant programs, and unlimited opportunities for spiritual growth and service. Support is available to you through Episcopal Church Women in your local parish, convocation or deanery, diocese, province, and nationally at www.ecwnational.org

Relationship with the Rector/Vicar

This is a very key element. It is very important to have the support of the Rector or Vicar of your parish. Schedule a meeting of the key women in the congregation with him/her. Tell him/her that you are interested in organizing the women's ministries of the church. One method of doing so is by forming an Episcopal Church Women group. Explain that you would like to have a meeting of all the women of the church to discuss plans. Include an invitation to attend that gathering. Emphasize that you understand that activities should supplement the existing mission and ministry of the congregation.

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Financers

This should be discussed with the rector or vicar. Some Episcopal Church Women groups maintain their own accounts, and others are supported through a line item in the parish budget. Some also function event to event by requesting contributions to participate. The size of your group and the level of activities will impact any decisions on funding.

First Meeting

In consultation with the rector or vicar, select a date for gathering the women of your congregation to talk about the formation of an Episcopal Church Women group. The date and time should be when the greatest number of women can participate. We recommend that you ask someone from outside of your congregation to facilitate this session. There are women serving on the diocesan, provincial, and national boards who can help. This creates an atmosphere of importance and openness. Promoting the gathering is critical. Use all methods of communication available such as Sunday bulletins, email, the church website, monthly newsletters, announcements, posters, special mailings, phone calls and face to face invitations. Please see Section 9, Promotional Quips for Bulletins and Newsletters. In planning the agenda, include time for prayer, fellowship, ice-breakers, personal reflection, group discussion, and next step decisions. Make sure to provide childcare.

Additional Materials

We have included several items to assist in the development of your Episcopal Church Women group including some general information regarding women's groups and activities, generational materials that provide insight into planning, and several ideas for determining a plan for your group. There are also brochures describing the work of the National Board of Episcopal Church Women.

Inviting Women and Building ECW

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to close of the age. Matthew 28:19-20

Reaching out and connecting with women of ALL AGES and LIFE STAGES is our effort to maintain and strengthen women ministries in the Episcopal Church. It is a *HARMONY of WORK* with good *COMMUNICATION*.

Episcopal Women must remember the challenges we have with different kinds of people and we don't all think alike. If you are reading this, you and your women's groups have probably had discussions about characteristics of people or how to reach out to younger women and older women. Both are important.

One area of differences is the six different generations and how each generation may affect the structure of the women's ministries. Let's examine the generational differences to help you evaluate what you are offering and be freshly relevant to more women. Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are older women with a lifetime of experience to share. They may have more time to offer with long-standing relationships in the church and community and can help with reaching goals of women's ministries and mentoring younger women to grow in faith. Women who are same age may not be at the same life stage. Women can be going through different things but be the same age. Also, there may be other groups of women you could reach out to intentionally, depending on where you live and economic structure and so on. Perhaps you live near a large college and could reach out to college girls or live near a military base and reach out to women serving in the military or wives and mothers of those serving. Be aware of the groups of women represented within your church, and ones represented in your community that might come to your church and participate in your women's ministries if they are welcomed. Despite differences, women are stronger when different personalities work together, and ECW ministries will be more effective.

So how will you promote what is going on? Some of the communication basics are still around because they work, and they may already be available at your church, such as bulletins, newsletters, Church and Women's Ministries websites, flyers or brochures. With all the technology available today, the very best way is to talk in person (if possible), making it short and sweet, or nice invitations rather than mass emails. Be ready to talk about upcoming ECW events and share stories of how ECW ministries have impacted lives. Take pictures at your ECW events and activities and use them to illustrate how the ECW ministry in your church is befriending women, building relationships, and encouraging them to grow with prayer into women of God.

<u>GENERATION NAME</u>	<u>YEARS</u>	<u>YOUNGEST AGE</u>	<u>OLDEST AGE</u>
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Silent Generation	1925 - 1945	74	100 +
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- The Great Depression
- The Dust Bowl
- World War II
- McCarthy Era

Baby Boomer Generation	1946 – 1964	55	73
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- President JFK, Martin Luther King, Jr, and Robert Kennedy assassinations
- Space exploration
- Vietnam War Era
- The Civil Rights movement
- Beatlemania and Woodstock
- Boomer Era Television

Generation X	1965 – 1980	39	54
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- The Fall of the Berlin Wall
- The Challenger Disaster
- AIDS
- MTV Generation
- Desert Storm

Millennials or Generation Y	1980 – 1995	24	39
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- September 11th terrorist attacks
- The Great Recession
- Internet Explosion / Social Media / Video Games / Y2K

<u>GENERATION NAME</u>	<u>YEARS</u>	<u>YOUNGEST AGE</u>	<u>OLDEST AGE</u>
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Generation Z	1995 – 2015	4	24
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- Mass Shooting Generation
- YouTube
- Computer Vision Syndrome
- Marriage Equality
- Barack Obama, First Black President
- Cyber Warfare and ISIS

Generation Alpha	2010 – 2025	6	9+
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- Most Technological Demographics
- Artificial Intelligence
- Children of Millennials
- Wearing Health Wearables to Track Health

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How to Start or Participate in a National Episcopal Church Women Group

ECW's that want to thrive with health and vitality need to consider the following:

1. Stop and look at what you are doing as an ECW organization. Are you addressing the felt needs of women in your church? What are these needs? Are you doing things the same way you did ten years ago? In the face of rapid changes, you cannot stand still. You must adapt to changing needs, be flexible, be creative and give yourselves permission to do it differently.
2. ECW leadership must periodically go into retreat to pray together for guidance, reflect on the current scenario, evaluate and plan.
3. Remember that not all ECWs should look alike. The days of handbooks with a single model for ECWs are over. Each group should reflect the needs of the location.
4. Strong ECWs are not duplicating activities that are currently being provided at their churches. They address needs not being offered. They talk to women they would like to attract and listen...really listen.
5. Healthy ECWs understand the purpose of their organizations. They often have written mission statements expressing this purpose and organize and evaluate everything they do around these statements. They are closely in tune with the mission and vision of their particular church.
6. Smart ECWs work closely with their clergy. They express the desire to be a part of the clergy's and vestry's vision for the church. They are mutually supportive and are vocal about that support.
7. ECWs with vitality have a team leadership approach. These teams work together and support each other. They assist one another in weak areas and encourage ministry well done and celebrate successes. They work together as Sisters in Christ to love each other, rise above pettiness, hostile criticism and backbiting.
8. Productive ECWs have well-defined ministries. Persons are given written job descriptions and know the time limits to their commitments. They are given opportunities to repeat the job if they desire or bow out at the appropriate commitment end.
9. ECWs enjoying success do not mix business with pleasure. Business meetings are held independent of programs, retreats, etc., but are open to all interested persons.
10. ECW business meetings are organized and well run, but sensitive to the persons participating. Significant prayer and devotional time are built into the meetings. If possible, intercessory prayers and sharing time are included at the end of the meeting.

How to Start or Participate in a National Episcopal Church Women Group

11. Creative, well-planned retreats and quiet days are central to the activities of healthy groups. In addition, activities that focus on building community among the women are critical. Small groups of women who meet regularly for study, prayer and fellowship are key to larger groups addressing the spiritual needs of women.
12. Outreach ministry beyond the walls of the church is extremely important to successful groups.
13. Strong groups do not let "Martha" type activities and fundraising dominate their agendas.
14. Communication is key. The most effective ways to communicate information are:
 - face to face
 - text
 - email
 - telephone
 - announcements in church bulletins and newsletters
 - signs and posters
 - Facebook and other social media sites

Remember:

Women gather today for inspiration, education, fellowship, fun and opportunities to escape a frantic lifestyle. Our uniqueness is grounded in being Christian women in community with each other.

A quick evaluation measure - How does your ECW measure up? The time, talent and treasure of a healthy ECW organization will fall into these categories: 1/3 inreach activities, 1/3 outreach activities, 1/3 spiritual growth activities.

Inreach - "Martha" activities that benefit the church, including fundraising that is spent on the church.

Outreach - Anything given outside the walls of the church including time and fundraising.

Spiritual Growth - Worship, religious education, sharing, intimate fellowship, quiet days, retreats.

Recruitment!

The most important thing to remember about getting women involved is to ask them face to face, friend to friend, or through acquaintances. The “climate” of the ECW or Women’s Ministries group must be inviting, always welcoming of newcomers, and loving as a community of Christian women. Positive energy and a “can do” spirit help assure success.

Who to ask – Think about women who need a new focus, have recently retired, are in a new life stage, or have made a recent move into the church and need to connect, make friends, and find a significant ministry. Seek assistance from clergy, lay coordinators, other staff, or parishioners who know lots of members.

How to recruit – Talk about how you have benefited from participating in ECW or women’s ministry and how you see this as a vital part of the mission of your church. If they appear interested, have another person they may know or know-of call to discuss the benefits of participating.

Provide any written/other information concerning ECW at all levels – local, diocesan, provincial, national. Share the website addresses. Provide ministry (job) descriptions with time commitments.

Give them time to decide. Don’t pressure them for an immediate answer. Coercion is not a loving thing to do!

Recognize potential persons.

Engage them in discussion face to face.

Communicate the facts about the organization.

Review the benefits you have experienced by participating in ECW.

Understand their situation, time availability, abilities/skills, and see where the best fit may be.

Invite them into the life of ECW by helping them connect with others and feel comfortable.

Thank them for joining with others to help achieve the mission of the ECW.

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Promotional Quips for Bulletins and Newsletters

Author Brene Brown said, “I don’t have to chase extraordinary moments to find happiness – it’s right in front of me if I’m paying attention and practicing gratitude.” Come practice gratitude with the ECW on *date*.

Author Brene Brown said, “Sometimes the bravest and most important thing you can do is just show up.” ECW needs you to show up on *date*.

Former Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts-Shori said, “...remember the centrality of our mission is to love each other. That means caring for our neighbors.” Please join the ECW on *date* as we come together in community to care for each other.

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of Eat Pray Love, said, “Stop wearing your wishbone where your backbone ought to be.” Stand tall with our ECW. Join us on *date*.

Melinda Gates said, “A woman with a voice is by definition a strong woman. But the search to find that voice can be remarkably difficult.” Come let the ECW help you find your spiritual voice on *date*.

Former First Lady Barbara Bush said, “Some people give time, some money, some their skills and connections, some literally give their life's blood. But everyone has something to give.” We want to give you the community of ECW. Please join us on *date*.

Becca Stevens, the priest who founded Thistle Farms, said, “I’ve learned that our job is not to change the world. Our job is to change ourselves so that we may more fully love the world as it is.” Come learn how the ECW spreads the love of the world on *date*.

Author Ann Voskamp said, “When you’re overwhelmed with the goodness of God to you-you overflow with the goodness of God to others.” Come experience the goodness of God. Join the ECW on *date*.

Author Jennie Allen said, “There is an art to living that is far above the base human instinct of survival. I want to live beautifully.” See how the ECW helps us to live beautifully. Join us on *date*.

Joan Chittister, an American Benedictine nun and author, said, “It is precisely women’s experience of God that this world lacks.” But not at ECW! Join us on *date*.

Joan Chittister, an American Benedictine nun and author, said, “Alone, I am what I am, but in community I have the chance to become everything I can be.” Be all you can be with the ECW.

Ideas for Planning an Event

A Focus Group Event

When your church is ready to revise, revamp, recreate or start an organized women's group, it is best to have an event that will uncover the needs of the women of your church. Conducting and hosting a focus group can be one of the most important tools to ascertain the needs and concerns of a community.

The current leaders, or where there is no group, a committed core of 4-6 women, should do the following:

- ❖ Invite, face to face, by phone, email or evite, the women of your church to a Focus Group Event. Make sure to convey the purpose of the meeting, which is to get their honest input in order to recreate, redesign or start an organized women's ministries group.
- ❖ Plan a meeting at a time convenient for most women that includes some time for fellowship and refreshments. The discussion should not last over 90 minutes.
- ❖ Invite someone who is not a member of your church to facilitate the meeting. You might contact someone from the diocesan or provincial organization or a neighboring church. You want someone who does not have a vested interest in the outcome of the gathering.
- ❖ Have an easel, markers, paper and pens available.
- ❖ Provide nametags so that the facilitator can see the name of each participant.
- ❖ Include a person to record notes of the focus group. Provide the note keeper with discussion questions, etc. prior to the meeting so they will be able to easily follow the progression of the meeting.
- ❖ Greet each group participant as they arrive.
- ❖ Have everyone gather as a whole group and explain the purpose of the meeting. Open with a short icebreaker activity. (An icebreaker activity is provided in this handout). Have the rector or vicar present to express support for this effort and to welcome everyone.
- ❖ The facilitator should always introduce herself to the entire group. The facilitator should be friendly, open and honest.
- ❖ The facilitator should set ground rules at the beginning of the meeting. Ground rules should include some of the following:
 - ◆ Be respectful of each other.
 - ◆ Agree to disagree.
 - ◆ No talking at the same time.
 - ◆ Raise your hand before sharing a comment.

- ❖ The role of the facilitator is to listen very carefully to the comments of the participants. In order to avoid any miscommunication, it's a great idea for the facilitator to summarize any comments for the sake of accuracy and clarification. It's extremely important for the facilitator to:
 - ♦ Maintain control of the group
 - ♦ Not argue or disagree with participants
 - ♦ Avoid leading participants towards preconceived ideas
 - ♦ Maintain a neutral position at all times
 - ♦ Encourage active communication and interactive discussion
 - ♦ Make sure that everyone gets an opportunity to share
 - ♦ Discourage side conversations
 - ♦ Be genuine; participants can identify fakeness
 - ♦ Use humor, it helps to relax the group
- ❖ Once the focus group has ended, remember to thank participants for attending.
- ❖ Before leaving the session, make sure that there is a group to take the results, publish them, and work toward implementation.

As a leader of women's ministries... It is important to remember that your goal is to serve, not be served. Christ will honor your efforts, especially if you are open to your sisters in Christ and willing to make changes that are necessary to build a stronger community of women in your congregation. Pray and work with others as a team who feel called to this ministry. Work hard, pray for guidance, and trust that God will use you in special ways, sometimes beyond your understanding.

ECW Planning-Handout #1

Directions: Gather in small groups of three persons. Take a few minutes in quiet reflection to consider the questions below. Allow each person in the group 5-7 minutes to share her responses to the questions with the other persons in the group. The object of this exercise is to get to know each other as sisters in Christ. Sharing from the heart asks merely for acceptance. Love each other by thoughtfully listening without giving advice or responding with your similar story.

Time allotted: 25 minutes

Tell the group some highlights from your life journey – where you were born, grew up, schooling, employed positions, current family situation.

What brought you to this church? What have you found in this congregation that brings you joy? How has being a member of this congregation challenged you?

Share with the group an event, moment, or period of your life when you realized a deepening of your faith and spiritual formation.

Do you have an awareness of a spiritual gift that God has given you, and if so, what is it?

ECW Planning-Handout #2

Directions: Jot down some responses to the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. They are valid because they are born out of your own experience. You will be sharing your answers with the whole group.

Time allotted: Personal reflection – 10 minutes Group sharing – 20 minutes

1. List 5 words or phrases that reflect your image of Episcopal Church Women.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

2. What was it about ECW that would draw you in to participate?

3. Describe what you need the ECW at this church to be for you.

ECW Planning-Handout #3

Directions: Answer Part 1 by yourself. Part 2 – Share your answers with each other. In Part 3, work together to come to consensus.

Part 1 – 5 minutes

What do you think are the three greatest needs of the women of our church that can be addressed through the work of the ECW? (Keep in mind the other activities going on in the parish. Duplication of activities may create less participation. Think in terms of addressing the needs of women that are not being met.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Part 2 – 5 minutes

Every member of your group needs to share her answers to Part 1. Jot down some notes on the back of this sheet of each other's responses.

Part 3 – 15 minutes

As a group, come to consensus on the three greatest needs of the women of your church that can be addressed through activities of the ECW in the coming year. These will be reported back to the whole group.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ECW Interest Survey

National Episcopal Church Women Meeting Workshop

Listed below are some of the many types of activities in which ECWs participate. Read all of the activities in a category and then number them in the order of your interest in participating in that type of activity with 1 being of the most interest.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1. _____ Small group Bible study that meets regularly.
2. _____ Small group spiritual/personal growth study with various study materials that meets regularly.
3. _____ Prayer vigils held for specific purposes.
4. _____ Quiet Days - often led by outside speakers, lasting 3 to 5 hours (sometimes quiet required, sometimes not!) for spiritual growth and meditation.
5. _____ Spiritual Growth Retreat - going away to an overnight location and being led by an outside speaker with emphasis on prayer, worship, spiritual growth.
6. _____ Personal/Self Discovery Retreat - going away to an overnight location and being led by a trained team of outside speakers with emphasis on personal growth and self-discovery
7. _____ Other kinds of retreats - going away to an overnight location, often with an outside speaker coming to lead part of it, with emphasis on a variety of activities, some fun, some just restful, some crafty-creative, etc.
8. _____ Field trips - to short destinations to visit historic churches, churches of other faiths, to see Christian drama presentations, to hear speakers at other places.
9. _____ Host at XXX - visiting speakers with emphasis on: (check if interested)
 - _____ personal growth
 - _____ personal/self discovery
 - _____ outreach ministries in the world
 - _____ dramatic Biblical/Christian presentations
 - _____ other _____

OUTREACH (ministries we do outside the walls of our local church)

1. _____ Be a part of a group of women who commit a full day or two to a task helping some cause in the community like Habitat for Humanity, re-paint a local food shelter, clean up an elderly woman's home, etc.
2. _____ Be a part of a group of women who commit regularly scheduled time to help some cause in the community like a women's shelter, food pantry, etc.
3. _____ Do a single fundraiser that requires minimum planning and preparation and give the funds raised to an outreach concern. (example: dinner, bake sale, garage sale, etc.)
4. _____ Do a fundraiser that requires significant planning, preparation and commitment of time and give the funds to an outreach concern. (example: bazaar, thrift shop, gift shop, etc.)
5. _____ Be a part of an ECW event that focuses on an outreach concern and in some way gives aid to that concern. (example: baby shower for a pre-natal clinic, toy shower for children's home, gathering clothes for the poor, etc.)
6. _____ Have an ongoing craft project that benefits an outside agency. (example: make rape crisis kits for local hospitals, make lap quilts for Ronald McDonald House, make emergency toiletry bags for women's shelter, etc.)
7. _____ Your ideas:

INREACH

1. _____ Have a one-time event fundraiser to purchase or contribute to something necessary for this congregation or building.
2. _____ Have a long-term fundraising event to purchase something expensive for the church.
3. _____ Do a handwork project for this church such as hangings, banners, kneelers, etc.
4. _____ Do Chrismons for a Chrismon tree to be used at Christmas for this church.
5. _____ Participate in an organized ministry to provide meals for persons at XXX.
6. _____ Have a party just for fun and fellowship. (example: slumber party, dinner party, etc.)
7. _____ Go out of town together with no serious agenda. (example: to a B&B, go antique shopping, see the wildflowers, go to a museum, go to a play)
8. _____ Have speakers come in to do demonstrations such as cooking, flower arranging, etc.
9. _____ Host a party for the whole church, theme party, dinner party, etc.
10. _____ Your ideas:

YOUR COMMITMENT

Please check all applicable phrases:

_____ I want to see a revitalized Episcopal Church Women group at XXX, and I will support it in spirit, with my prayers, and by participating as I am able to do.

_____ I do not think we need an organized Episcopal Church Women group at XXX at this time.

_____ I am interested in participating on a design team (4-8 women) that will work this year to determine the structure and function of the ECW organization and will plan the activities for next year. I am willing to make this a one-year commitment.

_____ I would consider taking on a leadership role for a single event planned by this group next year.

_____ I am not able to be a leader, but I make a good "worker bee." Please call on me to help with individual tasks.

_____ I am willing to make a limited number of telephone calls.

_____ I want to help in the following way: (your description)

Your name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Thank you.

Sample Agenda

EPISCOPAL CHURCH ECW MEETING/WORKSHOP AGENDA DATE

8:45 - 9:00	Gather and coffee
9:00 - 9:15	Opening prayer and introductions
9:15 - 9:30	Icebreaker
9:30 - 9:45	Reflections on who Episcopal Church Women were and are
9:45 - 10:15	Generations
10:15 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 10:40	Self-reflective assessment
10:40 – 10:55	Small group sharing
10:55 - 11:05	Small group reports
11:05 - 11:20	Full group discussion
11:20 - 11:25	Individual commitment
11:25 - 11:55	So where do we go from here....
11:55	Closing

M&M Icebreaker

Summary: The M&M Game is an icebreaker that allows people to get to know each other. Each person grabs some M&Ms and shares facts about herself.

Ages: All. Recommended number of people: groups of 3-12. Works best if you play this icebreaker with people sitting at tables. Those persons at each table have the chance to get to know each other.

Materials required: A large bag of M&Ms or any candy with multiple colors (e.g. Skittles).

Pour multicolor candy into a bowl. Have everyone in the group grab as much or as little as they like from the bowl. Make sure that no one eats their candy right away.

How to Play

For each piece of M&M candy they took, they will have to answer a question, depending on its color.

For example, you can designate:

- Red candy: favorite Christian book
- Green candy: favorite scripture verse
- Yellow candy: favorite Bible character
- Orange candy: favorite Biblical place
- Brown candy: most memorable God moment
- Blue candy: favorite worship song

You can be creative and choose any questions you think would be fitting for your group. The facilitator will then call out the color topic and everyone will go around the table sharing 1 answer per M&M. As an example: if you chose two red pieces of candy, you will have to name two of your favorite Christian books. After the individual has shared that color with the group, she may then eat her candy.

Continue to go around the table until each color topic has been shared.

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Planning a Meeting via Skype or Zoom

Videoconferencing is a great meeting tool and may be the perfect way for a Diocesan or Provincial meeting or for representatives from various churches to meet together. Most videoconferencing tools allow the transmission of text, audio and video. The main benefit is you can interact with anyone anywhere in the world and thus reduce travel costs. The software allows users to collaborate and share files. Your computer needs to be equipped with a microphone, headphones and a web camera to use video conferencing software. Two of the highest rated videoconferencing systems are Skype and Zoom.

Skype is a web-based communications tool that offers video chat, international calls and texting via the web. Dubbed by users and experts as one of the best videoconferencing solutions providers in the world, Skype offers instant messaging, group video conferencing, video chat, group chat, and collaboration functionalities such as document and image sharing. Contacting actual landlines and mobile phones is also offered for super low rates with no peak times. Currently, Skype is owned by Microsoft, and brings on board all functionality and responsiveness expected from this reputed provider. While its basic form is offered as a free service, Skype offers business functionalities and features for a very low price of \$2 per user per month. Up to 250 people can come into a Skype conference without leaving their desks or the comforts of their own homes. Skype operates on all devices, from the trusty desktops to mobile smartphones, making it easy for users to link up and communicate with each other and help each other stay on top of their business, ideas, projects and more.

Zoom is designed exclusively for hosting webinars, teaching online courses, and conducting online training, video demonstrations, virtual meetings and video conference. It represents an easy-to-use online video conferencing and meeting software that integrates video conferencing, simple online meetings, and group messaging into a single cloud-based platform. Group video meetings can also be conducted effortlessly wherein the host can screen-share from their desktop or mobile device. Zoom's basic plan is free. It allows you to host up to 100 participants with a 40-minute limit on group meeting. However, you may host an unlimited number of meetings. They offer online support and have great online instructions on how to get started.

It is recommended that if you decide to use videoconferencing for a meeting, that the meeting participants familiarize themselves with the site information prior to the meeting. Tutorials can easily be found online.

Sample Bylaws

This is just an example of bylaws. Parts can be added or deleted as necessary for your particular ECW.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Women of _____ Episcopal Church, City, State.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization is to relate the entire womanhood of the parish to the whole goal of the Church through a program of worship, study, service, gifts and fellowship to the end that each woman may find her place in the parish family and the mission of the church. This includes cooperation with the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of _____ and the Episcopal Church USA.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this organization shall consist of all women of _____ Episcopal Church and other women who are interested in the purpose of this organization.

ARTICLE IV: OBLIGATION

(This is done by the particular church whose bylaws we used to develop this sample. This is purely optional, but could provide startup funding and a tangible expression of commitment to the goals and future of the organization.)

A yearly contribution of _____ (\$10, for example) shall be encouraged to ensure that financial obligations may be met and that the on-going work of The Women of _____ Episcopal Church may continue. This amount shall be collected in _____ (first month) of every year.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

Section 1: Personnel and Term

The officers shall consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. They shall be elected at the _____ (example: fall) general meeting of the Women of _____ Episcopal Church. The term of officers shall be from _____ to _____ (same month).

Section 2: Duties

A. President: She shall preside at all meetings of The Women of _____ Episcopal Church, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee. She shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, fill vacancies occurring in offices and appoint the committee chairpersons. She shall perform all duties pertinent to the office of President.

B. Vice-President: She shall preside in the absence of the President. She shall serve as liaison for all groups and shall automatically assume the office of President the following year. She shall be responsible for planning of the programs for the general meetings.

C. Secretary: She shall keep the minutes of all meetings of The Women of _____ Episcopal Church. She shall conduct all general correspondence.

D. Treasurer: She shall receive and disburse all monies as she may be directed by the organization. She shall collect all membership contributions and shall give an accurate financial report when requested by the President. She shall accept budget requests and present a budget to the board no later than _____ (first month of the year). She shall obtain Executive Committee approval for any unbudgeted and unauthorized expenditure which arises between meetings of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: Personnel and Term

The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers, Committee Chairpersons, representatives from all women's organizations in the church, and the Lay Ministry Coordinator. They shall be elected for a term of one year, with the exception of the Treasurer who shall be elected for a two-year term.

Section 2: Committee Chairpersons

Any fundraiser, newsletter, permanent activity chairs.

Section 3. Organizations

1. Altar Guild
2. Daughters of the King
3. United Thank Offering
4. Church Periodical Club
5. Any women's bible study group.

ARTICLE VII: NOMINATING

The Nominating Committee shall consist of a chairman and two board members appointed by the Vice-President. They shall present a slate of officers to be elected at the _____ (last one of the year) general meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

There shall be a minimum of six (6) board meetings per year. There shall be a minimum of two (2) general meetings per year. The date, time, and place shall be designated by the Board of Directors.

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ARTICLE IX: QUORUM

A quorum of the Board of Directors shall consist of one-third (1/3) of the members of the board.
A quorum at a general meeting shall consist of the members present at the meeting.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

The bylaws may be amended by any general meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present, provided that written notice is given to all members at least one month prior to the meeting.