

**Report from the Episcopal Church Women
to the 141st Annual Convention of the Diocese of East Carolina**

Almighty God, we pray that you will bless our work in mission and ministry in the world. Help us to pray fervently, labor diligently and give liberally to make known the power of your love given through your son Jesus Christ. Let us not forget the lessons from the past nor fear the challenges of the future. Anoint us with your grace and shine in our hearts as we reflect your light throughout the world. AMEN.

The Episcopal Church Women held their annual meeting on May 10, 2023 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Beaufort. The meeting was well-attended by women across the Diocese. The meeting began with a moment of silence for our beloved president, Lucia Peel, who departed this world on the morning of May 8th. Lucia had served as president since 2020 and carried us through the pandemic. Our last phone conversation was when she was on the way to meet with the oncologist in Greenville and she wanted to let me know that she had arranged for the speaker at our August meeting. As bad as she felt, she was still working on her ECW obligations. Lucia was admitted to hospice that day. As Lucia would have wanted, our annual meeting went on. Jan Hemby, ECW president at St. Timothy's, Wilson, who has written two devotional books, *Burnt Toast* and *Spilt Milk*, was our speaker. Her program, *Bring the Truth of God's love to everyday life*, was well received. Bishop Skirving joined us for Holy Eucharist and installation of our new officers – Mary Duane Hale (President), Diane Meelheim (Secretary), Barbara Pedersen (Treasurer), District Chairs – Debbie Luke (Albemarle), Vivian Mott (Pamlico), Liz Meador (Trinity), Zona Tounsley (Lower Cape Fear) and Melene Hatcher (Upper Cape Fear). The plate offering went toward the purchase of a rocking chair at the Trinity Center in memory of Lucia. The day concluded with lunch. The Board meeting was held the night before followed by dinner at Tricia Phillips' home. Kit Reddick, Mission and Outreach Chair, organized a food collection for Martha's Mission.

Our August Gathering was held at the Trinity Center August 15-16. Adrian Wood, author of *Tales of an Educated Debutante*, was a real draw. She shared her personal glimpses of raising four children and one with special needs. Her stories reflected how satire meets truth, faith meets irony and despair meets hope and how we can be welcoming in the Episcopal church to everyone. Adrian attends St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Edenton and serves on the Trinity Board of Managers. Annie Jacobs, one of our past ECW presidents, who currently serves as president of Province IV ECW and chair of Social Justice on the National ECW Board spoke. Our outreach was collection of school supplies for bookbags for the Episcopal Farmworkers Ministry. The meals served by Trinity were delicious and enjoyed by all attendees.

Our two main missions are CPC (Church Periodical Club) and UTO (United Thank Offering). Deborah Alt served as CPC chair for the past four years – Melene Hatcher took over the reins as CPC chair in May. Funds for CPC come from collections at our churches during our two CPC drives. These donations enable us to award scholarships to our Diocesan seminarians and those preparing for the diaconate as well as support to National CPC. We presented scholarships to 5 preparing for priesthood and 4 four preparing for the diaconate 2023. Debbie Luke continues to chair UTO and has done an outstanding job. There was a Spring and Fall Ingathering and all collections are sent to National UTO.

We look forward to attending the 51st Triennial in June 2024 in Louisville , KY where we will be celebrating our 150th anniversary as a women’s ministry in the Episcopal Church. Triennial runs in conjunction with General Convention and our four delegates will attend worship services at General Convention each day.

All women in the Episcopal Church are members of the ECW. Much work is done throughout the Diocese by our organized church ECW groups. There is mission and outreach happening by the women in churches without organized ECW groups as well. We thank you all for your work and ministry as we all pray fervently, labor diligently and give liberally for the same mission - so that we can reflect God’s light throughout our churches, communities, Diocese, Province, nationally and the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Duane Hale

President, ECW