

LCWR-9 Spring 2018 Meeting Minutes
Hosted by Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
OSF Motherhouse, 3221 S. Lake Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53235

Monday, April 9, 2018 – Afternoon Session

Call to Order & Welcome

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, April 9, 2018. Theresa introduced Diana DeBruin, OSF, who welcomed Region 9 to the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Assisi. Diana provided the members with directions for the evening social, which is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. at Sisters Program South in Milwaukee.

Attendance

37 members representing 14 congregations attended (Attachment - Attendance).

Opening Prayer

An opening contemplative prayer was led by Carol Crosby, SCSC, focusing on “A Blessing for Rising”.

Introductions and Announcements

The sisters introduced themselves by name, by community, and by diocese. Each community shared a highlight that took place since the Fall 2017 meeting.

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, then introduced the members of the Executive Committee: Ellen Sinclair, SDS – Vice-Chairperson; Agnes Johnson, OP – Treasurer; Ann Rehrauer, OSF – Corresponding Secretary, and Diane Baumann, ANG – Recording Secretary.

Theresa invited the Region 9 members to consider attending V Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, to be convened by the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Grapevine, Texas, at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center from September 20-23, 2018. Anyone interested in participating on behalf of LCWR was asked to let Theresa know.

Theresa announced that Ann Rehrauer, OSF, had provided four cards of encouragement for Region 9 members to sign for Emily Anderson, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Emily has been posting our materials on the Region 9 website. Russ Mancl, communicator for the Holy Cross Sisters of Merrill, has been posting our materials in Emily's absence.

Presentation by Lynn Levo, CSJ

Vice-Chairperson Ellen Sinclair, SDS, introduced our speaker for the afternoon, Lynn Levo, CSJ, Ph.D. Lynn is a consulting psychologist and a national and international speaker who works especially with women and men's congregations. Lynn's presentation was entitled, “Understanding and Fostering Well-Being for All Sisters.” Her focus topics included:

- What is your current reality?
- Some steps for leaders to consider;
- Well-being;
- Understanding and Promoting These Dynamics in Development in Adult Life
 - 1) Letting Go – realizing I am enhanced by letting go in love;
 - 2) Growing from the general to the specific – self-acceptance and self-love AND accepting and loving others;
 - 3) Transcending self – self-interest gives way to generativity, making religious life possible for future generations;
- Leading Difficult People;
- Top Ten Ways to Inspire Others to Be Their Best Self.

Lynn's process included presentations, small group discussions and reports to large group.

Supper and Social

Diana DeBruin, OSF, provided information on the evening meal and on the social to be held at Sisters Program South. The meeting adjourned for these two activities.

Tuesday, April 10, 2018 – Morning Session

Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 10, 2018. Kathy Wiesneski, SCSC, led the opening prayer, which had been prepared by Linda Songy, SCSC, and which centered on a “Prayer for Guidance”.

Conversation with Lynn Levo, CSJ

Lynn Levo, CSJ, then entered into a conversation with members of Region 9. Lynn assisted the members in unpacking various understandings about anger, considering the areas of situation, filter, positive and negative anger, and action. When working with sub-groups in the congregation, we were encouraged to ask: What truth do they have that I need to hear? Then, take one problem off the table. Communication requires responsibility from the sender and from the receiver. We can ask ourselves: Who do I want to be at this time with this person; who am I called to be? The importance of our interior life was mentioned, along with encouragement to deal with inappropriate behavior, before it continues for too long a period. As Lynn concluded her conversation with us, Vice-Chairperson Ellen Sinclair, SDS, expressed appreciation to Lynn on behalf of Region 9 for her excellent and helpful insights.

LOTUS Organization

Theresa Sandok, OSM, shared information with the group on LOTUS, Legal Options for Trafficked and Underserved Survivors. Rachel Monaco-Wilcox is the founder and CEO of the group, which focuses on legal services, policy initiatives, education and survivor empowerment.

LCWR 9 Business

Agenda: Approval of Minutes

Recording Secretary Diane Baumann, ANG, presented the draft of the minutes of the October 16-17, 2017 LCWR-9 Fall Meeting; the minutes were approved with the following corrections:

- page 1 – Call to Order and Welcome - “Cooley” changed to “Coulee”.
- page 2 – Liaison Reports – Trafficking - “Tony” changed to “Toni”.
- page 2 – Liaison Reports – “Wisconsin Catholic Conference” – Susan Seeby – changed to “Wisconsin Council of Churches”.

Finance Report

Agnes Johnson, OP, Treasurer, distributed the following financial reports:

- checkbook activity from 10-05-17 through 03-31-18, with a beginning checkbook balance of \$13,399.69 and a closing balance of \$13,790.69. The current checkbook balance is \$12,496.74;
- CD Value of \$10,312.08, which was renewed on 03-05-18 for a period of 10 months;
- Wisconsin Collaborative Project: Erica P. John Fund, with a value of \$25,000.00 and Community Donations, with a value of \$17,331.59, making a total of \$42,331.59.
- GHR Grant, which will have \$3,678.52 after paying the March bills;

The finance report was unanimously approved. (Attachment – Finance Report)

The Sisters without Borders planning group requested funds from the region, which could be used for the speaker's airfare. Up to \$1,000.00 was approved by the members for the expenses of the gathering. Teresa Maya, CCVI, President of LCWR, will serve as the speaker for the event.

Additions to the Agenda

Wisconsin Religious Collaborative – Pat Cormack, SCSC, was added to the agenda under Liaison Reports.

Liaison Reports

- *Communicators for Women Religious, Region 9* – Report presented by Diana DeBruin, OSF. The group met in Fond du Lac on April 4, 2018, for a presentation on the Wisconsin Religious Collaborative by Pat Cormack, SCSC, and Theresa Sandok, OSM. Diana was unable to attend the meeting.
- *LCWR 9 Legislative Network* – A written report was sent to members before the meeting by Liaison Toni Harris, OP. The following oral report was shared by Toni during the meeting. Toni attended the March 20th Legislative Network meeting, where four actions were requested of LCWR 9 members:
 - Earth Day, 2019 – each congregation is asked to recruit a representative who would serve on a team to plan materials for a contemplative process to be used on Earth Day;
 - Mining Opposition – leadership teams are asked to consider the adoption of a resolution stating strong opposition to the “Back Forty” mining project; a sample resolution was provided;
 - Gun Violence Legislation – our liaison to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference is urged to advocate strong gun control legislation in Wisconsin;
 - Representative at Network Meetings – leadership teams are asked to encourage their representatives to LCWR Region 9 Legislative Network (LR9LN) to participate in Network meetings; the next meeting is Sept. 11, 2018.
- *Wisconsin Human Trafficking Consortium* – A written report was sent to members before the meeting by Liaison Toni Harris, OP. Toni commented that it is difficult to make contact with the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Consortium (WAHTC). Efforts are being made to revitalize the use of the “Anti-Human Trafficking Parish Toolkit.”
- *Wisconsin Catholic Conference Public Policy Advisory Committee* – Liaison Jean Steffes, CSA, had provided information from the Wisconsin Catholic Conference to Region 9 members before the meeting. Jean mentioned that the group will meet in either May or June, and again in September or October, 2018.
- *Wisconsin Council of Churches Public Policy Committee* – Liaison Susan Seeby, CSA, had sent updates from the Wisconsin Council of Churches to Region 9 members before the meeting. Susan had no further report.
- *Wisconsin Religious Collaborative (WRC)* – Pat Cormack, CSCS, reported on the progress being made with the Wisconsin Religious Collaborative. Pat stressed the idea of accountability to the members, and distributed financial reports to the Region 9 members; \$51,191.62 has been spent to cover the expenses of forming the collaborative; these funds have come from grants and donations. The WRC filed articles of incorporation with the State of Wisconsin as a not-for-profit, non-stock corporation on March 26, 2018. The WRC has obtained an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and is now seeking inclusion in the Official Catholic Directory through the

Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The group is now undergoing a search for an Executive Director; the hope was to hire the director by May 1 with a start date of July 1, 2018, but those deadlines may need to be extended. Information was provided regarding the dues structure for the member congregations of WRC; grants will also be sought. Pat and Theresa Sandok, OSM, gave a presentation on the WRC to the Wisconsin Catholic Bishops on February 28, 2018, and to the Communicators for Women Religious, Region 9, on April 4, 2018.

Tuesday, April 10, 2018 – Afternoon Session

LCWR National Business

Surface Names for LCWR President-Elect

As Region 9 members re-convened after lunch, Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, shared a PowerPoint presentation from the national office and invited the members to engage in the process of surfacing names for LCWR's President-Elect. Members worked in small groups and surfaced the following names, reporting them to the large group:

- Toni Harris, OP – 5 nominations
- Kathy Slesar, OP – 4
- Ginger Downey, OLVN – 1
- Ramona Miller, OSF – 1
- Susan Gatz, SCN – 1
- Janice Bader, CPPS – 1
- Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ – 3
- Maureen Geary, OP – 2
- Donna Pollard, OSF – 1

Region 9 members decided to submit the following nominations to the national office:

- Toni Harris, OP, with a statement of recommendation by Ann Rehauer, OSF;
- Kathy Slesar, OP, statement by Maryann McMahon, OP;
- Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ, statement by Jean Steffes, CSA; and,
- Maureen Geary, OP, statement by Kathy Slesar, OP.

All Region 9 members were invited to sign the nomination forms.

Assembly Resolution Process

Theresa Sandok, OSM, led a process to determine the region's response to the Recommitment of the 2016 Assembly Resolution, as recommended by the Global Concerns Committee:

“In the presence of constant and painful reminders of the deep roots of racism in our country, we the Leadership Conference of Women Religious reaffirm the 2016 Assembly Resolution and pledge to go deeper in the critical work of creating communion, examining the root causes of injustice and our own complicity, and purging ourselves and our country of the sin of racism and its destructive effects.”

The following input was provided by Region 9 members:

- Did the Global Concerns Committee meet before Parkland? Are we missing an opportunity to speak up for nonviolence?
- Broaden the statement to include nonviolence.
- The issue is broader than just racism; it includes the reality of “power over” people.
- Add: critical examination of white privilege.
- Need stronger emphasis on creating communion – we want justice, mercy, equality.
- Examine root causes, create awareness, build solidarity.
- “Purge” has a violent connotation (e.g. Hitler “purging” the Jews).
- The 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., would be a good connection to make with the resolution.

LCWR 9 Business

Topics/Dates of Future LCWR 9 Meetings

Ellen Sinclair, SDS, Vice-Chairperson, led a discussion of future meeting details.

- The Region 9 Fall 2018 meeting will be held October 15-17, 2018 at Sinsinawa, with OP Racine leading the prayer; Amy Hereford, CSJ, will speak on "Religious Life at the Crossroads".
- The Spring 2019 meeting is scheduled for April 8-10, 2019 at Elm Grove, hosted by the SSND and SDS congregations; prayer will be led by FSPA. David Courturier, OFM Cap., will speak on "Discerning the Hidden Expectations and Motivations of Congregations".
- The Fall 2019 meeting will be held October 14-16, 2019 at Racine, hosted by the OP Racine and OSM congregations; prayer will be led by OSM; speaker is to be determined.
- The Spring 2020 meeting is scheduled for April 20-22, 2020 in DePere, hosted by OSF Green Bay and ANG; prayer will be led by OSF Green Bay; speaker will be determined.

Region 9 members were encouraged to suggest future speakers on the Survey Monkey evaluation which will be prepared and emailed by Theresa Sandok, OSM.

Region 9 Website

Theresa Sandok, OSM, shared information about the LCWR 9 Website. Some people are experiencing difficulty accessing the website. Emily Anderson had been posting our information, but is now battling cancer. Russ Mancl, Communication Director for the Holy Cross Sisters, is currently posting information. The Wisconsin Religious Collaborative is in need of a website; there is discussion about having the same website provider, perhaps Faith Website, with separate website pages for LCWR 9 and for WRC. Region 9 members approved a \$500-\$600 expenditure for a fresh website. The Executive Committee will pursue this need.

Report on Plans for Meeting with House Speaker Paul Ryan

Diana DeBruin, OSF, reported on work being carried out by Toni Harris, OP, Marilyn Ketteler, OSF, Marcia Lunz, OSF, Maryann McMahan, OP, and herself, in regard to planning a meeting with Speaker Ryan. The goal is to have a face-to-face meeting with him in the spirit of dialogue and identification of common ground. Social justice coordinators, district constituents, and sisters who have taught Speaker Ryan have also been involved in attempts to schedule a meeting with him on the DACA situation. These two planning groups have been denied a meeting on more than one occasion. Some wondered if Congregation's leaders planning group should talk to Tommy Thompson and he could talk with Speaker Ryan to encourage a meeting.

The group has kept documentation of all attempts to schedule a meeting. They have discussed working with Wisconsin Catholic Conference and talking with Jean Steffes, CSA, liaison, for her input and assistance. The group has considered writing a letter to Speaker Ryan, in which they would mention common ground and shared Catholic values; they have discussed how to get the letter to him. Two hundred letters delivered in person to his Washington office were never seen by him. The group continues to discuss possibilities.

*During the Region 9 Spring 2018 meeting, the members learned that Speaker Ryan will retire and will not run again for Congress.

LCWR National Business

Assembly Resolution and Region 9 Congregational Actions

Congregations described ways in which they have attempted to address racism:

- OP Racine – focused on racism in housing, education, and prison, through study groups that reported to chapter on results and actions; took part in “Unlearning Racism” workshop by Your Weekly Constitutional Series (YWC);
- CSA – participated in “Racial Justice Tipping Point” through Marian University; involved in “Community with Diversity Days” in Fond du Lac; supported Brotherton Indians' first powwow; Annual Earth Day Fair, this time with Green Muslims – greening of mosques;
- FSPA – hosted the “People's Picnic”, being a people of hospitality to all; group meets regularly at Motherhouse, working for acceptance of Muslims;
- OP Sinsinawa – took part in “Crossroads Training”, a 2 ½ day event with sisters and lay people; have an anti-racism training team in the congregation; have direction statements and chapter acts on the topic;
- ANG – prison reform: Wisconsin has the highest per capita incarceration of African Americans and Native Americans; racial profiling is evident; worked with legislature in Madison, lobbying against a multi-million dollar new prison; assembly passed the bill, but bill was never placed on the docket for the state Senate, which is considered a victory;
- Region 9 – Fran Kaplan's Fall 2017 presentation to Region 9 on racism, dominant cultures and raising awareness;
- OSF – repeated attempts to have a value-based conversation with Speaker Ryan; worked with Tony Gittens on acceptance of difference and interculturality;
- OSF – hold special gatherings with new employees, showing respect for African American employees; had Bryan Massingale as speaker on topic of interculturality;
- SSSF and CSA – collaborate with Lutheran Social Services to find apartments and houses for refugees in transition;
- OP Sinsinawa, SSSF, OSF, SSJ-TOSF – Collaborate on Sisters Program South – a model of empowerment.
- FIT organization, a place for everyone; two hundred people in the group collaborate.

V Encuentro

Theresa Sandok, OSM, checked with Region 9 members to see if anyone would be willing to represent LCWR at V Encuentro. Cyndi Nienhaus, CSA, volunteered to participate in the event. Region 9 members expressed their appreciation to Cyndi.

Relationship of Regions to Each Other, National Board, and National Office

Theresa Sandok, OSM, shared information with the Region 9 members about future relationships within LCWR, for the purpose of mutual communication. After each board meeting, one board member will meet via Zoom with several regional chairs and a staff member from the national office. The regional chairs will meet with the Board the day before the national assembly. Regions are invited to use the national website and updates to present regional news.

Annual Report

Theresa Sandok, OSM, invited Region 9 members to surface ideas for the Annual Report. The first question presented for discussion was:

How have the programs, speakers, actions, meetings of your region helped its members be the presence of love – for their communities, the region, the world they serve?

The following ideas were shared:

- Forming the Wisconsin Religious Collaborative – it has taken all of our communities to help with the collaborative and to say that we needed help;
- Bringing in Dr. Fran Kaplan to speak to us on racism – encouraging us to help in a way that doesn't disempower people;
- Visiting Sisters Program South during our Spring meeting; being introduced to the two women who have been freed from the sex trade and now serve on the program board;
- Having the Racine Dominicans sponsor a transgender workshop;
- Being a contemplative prayer presence and inviting others to join us in prayer; having each congregation commit to weekly prayer for our country; being involved in ecumenical, contemplative prayer circles;
- Having the Hilton Foundation and the National Catholic Sisters Conference mini-grants fund contemplative circles at colleges and universities;
- Collaborating with other civic groups in marches on nonviolence, DACA, etc.
- Sponsoring buses to DC from Fond du Lac for “March for Our Lives”, involving university students; sponsoring a march on campus;
- Bringing consciousness to our civic communities regarding social justice.

The second question for consideration was:

How has your region experienced transformation this past year?

- The Wisconsin Religious Collaborative is having a transformative effect not just on religious in Wisconsin but in the nation as well;
- Our spring speaker, Lynn Levo, CSJ, called us to personal transformation in leadership;
- Every congregation is in process of change, and we're all in different stages; we are not engaging in negativity or resistance to our current reality;
- Collaboration and support helps bring about the transformation;
- Placing ourselves physically “in the place” of Sisters Program South was transforming;
- The report from the group attempting to meet with Speaker Paul Ryan revealed a transforming approach: dialogue and relationship, rather than shaming.

New Book from LCWR

Theresa Sandok, OSM, shared information about a new book, *However Long the Night: Making Meaning in a Time of Crisis*, edited by Annemarie Sanders, IHM. The book presents the story of how LCWR found an alternate contemplative way of working through impasse, namely the experience with the doctrinal assessment of LCWR. The book, which is available through Amazon in print and Kindle editions, will be promoted by the Communicators. The authors are available for speaking engagements.

LCWR 9 Business

Funds of Region 9

Kathy Slesar, OP, raised questions about the current funds of Region 9 and possible uses for those funds. A suggestion was made to donate 4-5% of LCWR 9 funds each year, to groups such as LOTUS, Sisters Program South, etc. Perhaps a group could be established to review applications for funds. The Executive Committee will discuss these ideas at their next meeting.

Election of LCWR 9 President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary

The Nomination Committee consisted of:

- Pat Cormack, SCSC; Carol Crosby, SCSC; Linda Songy, SCSC; and, Kathy Wiesneski, SCSC.

Kathy Wiesneski, SCSC, facilitated the election. Kathy presented the following slate of officers:

- Chairperson: Jean Steffes, CSA
 - Vice Chairperson: Ellen Sinclair, SDS; second two-year term
 - Recording Secretary: Susan Seeby, CSA
 - Treasurer: Rose Jochmann, OSF.
 - Corresponding Secretary, Ann Rehrauer, OSF will continue to serve her term.
- No nominations were offered from the floor. Kathy Slesar, OP, moved and Marcia Lunz, OSF, seconded the motion to approve the slate of officers; the motion was unanimously approved by the Region 9 members.

It was noted that Region 9 made a conscious exception to Article 4, 2.b. of the by-laws, which states that ordinarily no two members of the same community shall serve on the Executive Committee. The region notes that we find ourselves in extraordinary times, and therefore an exception is appropriate.

Announcements

Theresa Sandok, OSM, announced that tomorrow's session would deal with the LCWR Needs Assessment.

Diana DeBruin, OSF, informed the members that a tour of their new construction would be possible tomorrow during one of the breaks. Diana invited the Region 9 members to a social and festive meal, to follow immediately after adjournment.

Wednesday, April 11, 2018 – Morning Session

Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. on Wednesday, April 11, 2018. Kathy Wiesneski, SCSC, led the opening prayer, which centered on a quotation from Megan McKenna on resurrection, along with reflective music and quiet contemplation.

Announcements

Theresa Sandok, OSM, announced that the committee that plans the meetings of the Milwaukee bishops with leaders of religious communities is seeking new members. The committee is chaired by Bishop James Schuerman and currently consists of two priests, Peter Schuessler, SDS, and James Gannon, OFM, and two sisters, Nelda Hernandez, SDS, and Theresa. Theresa encouraged two or three other Region 9 members of the Milwaukee Archdiocese to join the group. Theresa also announced that Nelda Hernandez, SDS, had volunteered for the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Pastoral Council.

Jean Steffes, CSA, liaison to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference Policy Group, and Susan Seeby, CSA, liaison to the Wisconsin Council of Churches Policy Group, would like to hand over their liaison responsibilities to other members of Region 9, in view of their election to the LCWR 9 Executive Committee.

LCWR National Business

LCWR Needs Assessment

Theresa Sandok, OSM, named the members of the Needs Assessment Task Group: Rita Cammack, OSF, Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF, and Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM. LCWR is involved in a three-step process: Step 1 – Change in governance, approved by the Assembly and CICLSAL; Step 2 – Election of the new board; Step 3 – Assessment of the needs of members.

In preparation for the needs assessment, Theresa read aloud the LCWR Call 2015-2022, and then led a prayer process, "At the Heart of Leadership...at the Core of Leadership." Theresa then reviewed directions for the writing of a six-word memoir by each member. Several members shared their memoirs with the group.

Break and Tour

A tour of the Lake Franciscan construction project was conducted with small groups led by Diana DeBruin, OSF, Marcia Lunz, OSF, and Sylvia Anne Sheldon, OSF.

Needs Assessment, Continued

Region 9 members then participated in small group discussion in order to surface responses to the following questions:

- 1 – From your involvement in the Conference, what have been 3-4 key learnings/insights that have significantly impacted your service of leadership?
- 2 – Name 4 key LCWR experiences, services, or resources that you find most valuable for your ministry of elected ministry.
- 3 – What one or two questions that, if explored by LCWR, could make a difference in how we create the future of the Conference?
- 4 – Describe three concrete wishes for the future of LCWR.

36 Region 9 members participated in the needs assessment. Four members volunteered to review all of the responses from the small groups, which were recorded on colored index cards, and note the most frequently mentioned ideas. The four volunteers are: Ann Rehrauer, OSF, Rose Jochmann, OSF, Marcia Lunz, OSF, and Diane Baumann, ANG. The group will send a summary report, which is due on May 4, 2018, to the national office.

Liaison Positions and Other Roles

Jean Steffes, CSA, reviewed the responsibilities of the liaison to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference Policy Group. Maryann McMahon, OP, volunteered to be recommended as the liaison from Region 9 to the WCC.

The responsibilities were also listed for the liaison to the Wisconsin Council of Churches. A new liaison is still needed for that group.

Mary Diez, OSF, Rhea Emmer, CSA, and Kathy Slesar, OP, volunteered to serve on the planning committee for meetings of the Milwaukee Bishops with leaders of religious congregations.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

Pat Cormack, SCSC, led the closing prayer, beginning with the song, "Here I Am." After a reading from the Gospel of John and a reflection, a missioning blessing was prayed for those who are completing their ministry of community leadership, and upon those who will continue in leadership. The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Baumann, ANG,
Recording Secretary