

Southwestern Deanery Report, September 2020

COVID-19 has hampered the efforts of many, including the Women's Councils of the SW Deanery. Meetings in both parishes were suspended. St. George Women's Group was able to conduct limited business, making a \$1000 donation to the renovation of Kuzy Hall, which we are all looking forward to completion, and contributing \$100 to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, designated for the retirement or education of priests and brothers in the order. Their Sunshine Welcome Committee sent "Get Well" Cards and delivered 7 Prayer Shawls to those who have been sick during the summer months. Due to the COVID-19, Committee members were not able to visit the 4 Assisted Living Facilities that they usually visit.

Four members of SGCWG volunteered to become Stephen Ministers: Saint George Catholic Church has launched a Stephen Ministries program and the aforementioned members are undergoing a very intense weekly training. This is a program for reaching out to those in the parish and community who must deal with troubled times: death in the family, loss of income, and spiritual needs and connecting them with resources when possible. It is "Christ caring for people through people". It expands the ability of a parish to connect with people, and lightens the load of the overloaded priests.

Stephen Ministers evangelize in a very real way, giving Christian witness as they share the Gospel through their care and ministry of presence, listening, encouraging, and praying with their care receivers.

COVID-19 also affected everyone's ability to hold fundraisers, but both Councils are looking forward to their first meetings, hopefully, in October. Both will be brainstorming fundraising options that can accommodate social distancing rules.

The Deanery Board did hold a meeting to discuss concerns. We elected a vice-president, Mary Skomal, and we revised our by-laws. We have also produced a "retreat" that due to COVID-19 restrictions, will need to be presented to small groups. It is entitled, "LIVING LOVED" and addresses those feelings of not belonging, not being accepted, not feeling not "good enough", and loneliness. It instills the idea that GOD LOVES US. At the same time it details ways to reach out to others and bring Christ to our encounters.

Respectfully, yours in Christ,

Mary LeBaron

