Members of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) in Connecticut continue to be actively engaged in a changing church. This is evident in the number of women engaged in parishes, Ministry Networks, community Outreach programs, Social Justice organizations, and other ministries too numerous to name. It is important also to know that these women are not just participants, but leaders.

A very good example of leadership is the work of women who are members of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Women in Connecticut. They were able to attend all the scheduled board meetings that were held during the months of February, April, June and September. In May, ECW hosted the 135th Annual Meeting attended by more than three hundred people including our Connecticut bishops, The Rt. Rev. Laura Ahrens, Bishop Suffragan, and the Bishop Diocesan, The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas. The day allowed people from throughout the state to meet, greet each other, and be inspired by the keynote address by The Rev. Lindsay Hardin Freeman, Episcopal Priest, Author, Speaker and Retreat Leader on Bible Women and Contemporary Spirituality.

Her message was encouraging to attendees especially to the board members as they decided on ways to serve and help others who serve. For example, the White Envelope recipients for the year 2016 were, The Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury, and the Kenyan Health Care Initiative. Education of the young people among us is always very important and we were able to provide scholarships to five daughters of our clergy who are attending college, funds to Camp Washington for scholarships, and personal items to high school students. Since many of our neighbors, especially in our cities, depend on soup kitchens for their meals, we identified and provided funding to five hunger outreach programs in Connecticut. Listed in the ECW Annual Report, are programs, agencies, congregations and other entities that receive financial support from the board as well as local parishes. Also included is information about ECW programs. Copies of the report are mailed to parishes yearly in August and are also available upon request.

As the structure of the church in Connecticut change from Deaneries to Regions, not only are ECW members involved in Regional Ministries, but we are also working to
ensure that all Regions are represented on our board. We are also encouraged that members from several parishes have indicated to us that they are interested in either reestablishing or start an ECW chapter. We welcome inquiries about our programs.

Finally, my thanks to all who work to sustain the success of ECW, special thanks to the members of parishes that hosted our meetings and to the officers and members who serve on the board. We are so blessed.

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