

## Sr. Susan's presentation for Femia's Maple Leaf Award

How lucky we are to be here tonight to honour one of members as she receives one of the highest awards available to a CWL member. The *Maple Leaf Service Pin* is an honour bestowed by a parish council on one of its members. This award was introduced in 1971 for members who have served the League in an exceptional and meritorious manner. The award highlights women who have been active League members for a minimum length of service of seven years. These women have performed specific outstanding League service over several years. They are a model of inspiration to all; of their service to others, their dedication to the League and their living faith as women.

Tonight's recipient displays all of these qualities and so much more. If there is work to be done, she is already contributing before you get a chance to ask her. If there is someone in need of support or consolation, she is already there walking by her side. She is a determined, faith-filled witness who speaks her mind clearly and with compassion – you never have to wonder what she is thinking. She freely shares her gifts of sewing, quilting, gardening and knitting with others. She is a patient teacher and an avid learner. She never hesitates to help others and is equally comfortable reaching out to others when in need of help or advice.

So, did you know that she played a significant role in our planting of 100 trees and installing of the CWL bench in the Willow Park Natural area? In her ministry of decorating our worship space for over 25 years her husband tells me, she went so far as to bring large nativity statues all the way from Holland! How about the fact that she was responsible for the sewing of many beautiful banners and wall hangings that graced the walls of both Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Holy Trinity churches? I didn't know that years ago she sewed many of the vestments still worn by our altar servers? Different colours and sizes too! I dare say by now that she knows who we're talking about. That's another thing about her – her humility. She never blows her own horn. She quietly serves in the shadows, doing the work and never drawing attention to herself. Like washing and ironing the clergy's albs and the altar cloths and purificators. I don't know how many years she's been doing this in the shadows but it's been many years!

Now let's speak to her service in the Catholic Women's League. She has 18 years of service, has held the position of Health and Education standing committee chair, president elect for five months before taking on the position of our parish council president for not only two, but three years! She was instrumental in forming our healing shawl ministry which has gathered women together once a week to crochet and knit over 400 shawls to date that have been gifted to anyone who asks to help loved ones who are going through a painful time of grief or illness. These shawls have found their way literally across the country and into the Yukon and Northwest Territories! I

don't have the time to share the many gifts she shared as our president. She said "Yes" when we were without a president for eight months. She walked into this position and with only four months under her belt, Covid hit. Most of her presidency saw her scrambling to find ways to stay connected with our members without meeting in person. She constantly focused on who was most in need of our support and sisterly companionship. We learned to do Zoom meetings, we did our membership drives and memorial services virtually. We were one of the few councils in our diocese who did not lose members during this time – a credit to her leadership and persistence. To add one more thing to her long list of duties, she has faithfully been taking pictures of our activities over many years. Without her, many wonderful moments would have been missed. The beautiful meeting room that we now have upstairs saw her and Gerald spend many hours working together to make this our new home where we can proudly display our CWL league history, flag, banner and honour our award recipients.

Today, that wall will be expanded by one! So, what do quilting, sewing, knitting, Our Lady's Garden, laundering and ironing, decorating, CWL leadership and service have in common? Our Maple Leaf Service Pin award recipient – Femia Streefkerk.

So let us applaud to thank Femia for all she has done and continues to do.