

**President’s Prose**

*By Jean Crumb*

This has been a busy year for our executive board. We celebrated W/ELCA’s thirtieth year and worked on committees and organized the convention at Mt Luther this July. We now have a full executive board to start our second year! We had a great churchwide representative, Dawn Smith at our convention as well as Jodi Ellis who presented a bible study and Sandy Nelson who had a workshop on her travels in Liberia. Bishop Collins presided at the worship service with Peggy Bohart assisting her. Robin, Kathy, and myself attended the tenth triennial which was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This was my first time attending a triennial and it was both interesting and eye opening! We met women from all over the USA. There were delegates from Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico to mention a few states. We heard speakers such as Leymah Gbowee who was instrumental in organizing women who prayed in the streets of Liberia effectively ending the civil war which was destroying their country. We heard Dr. Alexia Salvatierra from Los Angeles, California who spoke to us about poverty and immigration. She reminded us that the bible is full of characters who challenged unjust systems. The next triennial will be in Phoenix, Arizona in 2020. The theme is “Embraced by Grace.” I hope to go because it is a great opportunity to meet W/ELCA women who are women of bold faith seeking renewal.

I hope to see many of W/ELCA ladies at the Women’s Retreat this October. This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

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**Lutheran Disaster Response**

Our hearts are torn over the stories and images of what Hurricane Harvey is still doing to our sisters and brothers in Texas and Louisiana, and we want to know how we can help.

Our colleagues in Lutheran Disaster Response tell us that the best, most powerful way to help right now is to send monetary donations - and your prayers.

Please give to Lutheran Disaster Response through Women of the ELCA. Every cent of your donation will be forwarded immediately to Lutheran Disaster Response, and people will know that it’s the women of the church acting together to bring healing and wholeness to the church, the society and the world.

All you need to do is make out your check to Women of the ELCA and write Lutheran Disaster Response: US Hurricane Response on the memo line. Mail it to:

Women of the ELCA
ELCA Gift Processing Center
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield VA 22118-8009

You can keep up with Lutheran Disaster Response at elca.org/disaster.
News From The Triennial Convention & Gathering

~Sandy Grier

What a wonderful faith-filled, fun and fellowship time we had at our Triennial Convention and Gathering. I was honored to be reelected to represent you on the Churchwide Board of Women of the ELCA. We had amazing speakers and worship at both the convention and Gathering time.

Here’s a little bit more information from the Triennial Convention and Gathering.

- Nearly 3,400 participants attended the gathering, and more than 1,300 were first-timers.
- $49,094.60 was given in Thursday evening’s Thankoffering service.
- 404 participants ran in the Run, Walk and Roll.
- $19,116 was raised for seed grants to support Women of the ELCA’s health initiative, Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls.
- In-kind gifts included more than $19,000 in gift cards and more than 27,000 items of hygiene products, clothing, quilt kits, and Days for Girls kits.
- 5,850 labyrinths were crafted, gathered and given to gathering and convention participants. The rest will be distributed to various ministries in the Twin Cities.
- Nearly $64,000 was given during Sunday's service of Holy Communion. The offering is being shared among PV for Phebe (25 percent); Cherish All Children (25 percent); and Women of the ELCA (50 percent).
- 97 people gave blood for a total of 81 units. Each unit is separated into red cells, platelets and plasma, which could help as many as 243 people.

Our next Triennial Convention and Gathering will be held in Phoenix AZ in July 2020.

Look for more in upcoming newsletters
Many of our Women's Units offer Bible Studies and the book below is a wonderful supplement to any study offered.
- Sandy Grier

Bible Guide to The Land of Jesus - Many travelers to the Holy Land are restricted to a predetermined tour schedule and tend to visit sites marked by impressive churches or ancient ruins. Few people visiting the Holy Land consider the more obscure Biblical sites as places of interest to visit. Yet, many places throughout the region can offer the visitor food for thought, meditation and inspiration. Many of these towns and villages are off the beaten tourist track, nevertheless, they witnessed some of the most inspiring stories of the Old and New Testaments. There is a tremendous sense of history all around. Every hill and valley, town and village, seems to have some claim to fame. Bible stories take on a whole new dimension as they become real historical events that involved real people. It is exhilarating to follow the footsteps of Abraham, Moses, Joshua and David, to sit where Solomon was crowned king, and to walk where Jesus walked. This book provides detailed directions and maps to guide you to the vast majority of the sites of the Holy Land, and when you get there, it tells you about all of the Biblical events that occurred. The presenter's book, 101 Ways to Nurture Yourself, along with "friendship" aprons, pot holder/oven mitt sets and note cards will also be available for sale.
Blanket Sunday will be October 1

Drop off date will be October 14th at Buffalo Valley Commons. (On Reitz Boulevard across from the synod office.) Zartmans is again providing a trailer for this purpose.

Please remember that donations are to be boxed as instructed and well labeled. Items will not be accepted packed in plastic bags. We could use some healthy volunteers to help with packing the truck. Please call Sue Baylor and let her know if you can help. (570-279-4766)

There will also be a fund raiser for Camp Mount Luther on October 14th at Buffalo Valley Commons. BBQ, chips and a drink will be available for purchase, please come and socialize when you drop off your LWR items.

Day of Advocacy
October 21
Synod Office
11:00 AM

The topic is “Caring for your congregation and your neighbors” Speaker will be Ryan Versluis. Ryan Versluis became a trained Stephen Ministry Leader in 2006. He was involved in the Stephen Ministry program at St. John’s Ev. Lutheran Church, Hamlin, N.Y. where he trained two classes of new ministers and supervised active Stephen Ministers. He moved to Danville, PA in 2013 to help his wife care for her parents and joined Pine St. Ev. Lutheran Church. There he restarted a Stephen Ministry program and trained new Stephen Ministers and is recruiting new members.

He, with his wife, had served in a hospice home and Ryan serves two days a week as a hospital volunteer chaplain at Geisinger Medical Center.

The Day of Advocacy program is free. We will be collecting a free will offering.

The day promises to be exciting!

Bring a packed lunch, dessert and beverages will be provided.

Mission Action Committee News

The Mission Action committee includes Sue Baylor and Carol Winter as co-chair, Regina Gross, Carol Bradford, Dottie Heck, Ruth Koble and Stephanie Lewis.

Carol Main Scholarship Fund update:

The first payment has been received in Liberia and will be disbursed by the women of the Liberian Synod. Ruth Mengen, our second scholarship student has completed her nursing program and sent pictures.
My name is Robin Latsha. My family and I worship our wonderful Lord and Savior at Himmel’s Lutheran and United Church of Christ in Dornsife, PA, a church in the Tulpehocken Conference of the Upper Susquehanna Synod and the Central Association of the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ. I am currently the Secretary of the Executive Board of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. It’s amazing what can happen when a group works together to plan activities and coordinate the work of the Women’s Organization. My time spent as a board member has been a learning experience and has been very rewarding.

I have been happily married to my husband, Richard for 43 years and am the proud parents of Ryan, Raquel and Randy Latsha and proud grandmother of Jacob and Joseph Peifer and Juelz, Nicholas and Liam Latsha. My family is my pride and joy, and I am so blessed to be wife, mother and “Nana” to these wonderful persons. I am a lifelong member of Himmel’s being baptized there, baptizing my children there and having my grandchildren baptized there.

In my work day life, I am a scheduling clerk at Associated Oral Surgeons in the Sunbury, Lewisburg and Bloomsburg areas. I try to be the heart and hands of Christ as I serve the people of these areas in my everyday work life. God has blessed me tremendously, and I strive to serve Him to the best of my ability in every aspect of my life.

Over the years, I have been involved in various activities at Himmel’s including Sunday School teacher and superintendent, Secretary and Co-President of the WELCA unit, member of Parish Life Committee, Worship and Music Committee, Joint Council, Past President and Secretary of the Joint Council, Altar Guild, Choir member, Chime and Bell Choir ringer, Secretary of United Church of Christ Denomination of the Church, volunteer for Social Hour following church, sorter of clothing for Angel’s Closet clothing bank, and one of the four people who provide power point presentations of our church service. My time and energy spent in the work of our Lord means the world to me, and I am blessed to be able to serve our Lord in this way.

We have many events coming up in the next few months. Our women’s group and other members will be canning chow chow which is a major fundraiser for our building fund. Last year we canned over 1000 pints and quarts. September 10th is “God’s Work-Our Hands” Day. We are busy the whole afternoon with various events including filling shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child, filling school bags and knotting blankets to be sent to Lutheran World Relief, trash pick up in our community, pulling weeds at some elderly members homes, preparing a meal for shut ins and local homeless shelter, sorting clothes for Angel’s Closet as well as visiting with shut ins. Many people come together to participate in this worthwhile cause. Of course, October 1 is Blanket Sunday and we display the blankets we’ve made along with prayer shawls, lap robes as well as the school bags. Our Blanket Sunday speaker is Sandy Nelson who will speak on her recent mission trip to Liberia. We have our annual Praise and Thanksgiving Service and meal on November 12. Our guest speaker will be our Penn Central Conference Minister, Monica Dawkins-Smith. We look forward to hearing her message.

Himmel’s Mission statement is: “Gathered to worship, empowered by God, scattered to serve.” Our Vision statement is “Himmel’s is the mouth through which God speaks, the hands through which God works and the heart through which God loves.” Himmel’s is the German word for Heaven. We try to bring a little bit of heaven to earth as we strive to meet the needs of others.
President Jean Crumb welcomed delegates, visitors and guests to the convention. Each person received a Bulletin of Reports and Recommendations. There was a brief orientation for delegates to familiarize themselves with the booklet, Guidelines for Delegates, the Standing Rules, and an explanation of how the elections for the various offices were to proceed.

We then participated in the WORSHIP SERVICE led by Bishop Barbara J. Collins of the Upper Susquehanna Synod who spoke on the theme of “All Anew”. Assistant minister was Peggy Bohart, pianist Arletta Ney, lector Robin Latsha, communion assistant Charlene Artley and ushers were members of St. Paul, Nook.

We then returned to the meeting area and Jean Crumb led the “Order for Opening of Convention.”

First Business Meeting

Sue Baylor presented the first report of the Committee of Credentials as follows:
- 16 delegates, 3 officers, 5 board members, 19 participants and 6 guests for total of 49.
- The quorum was determined to be 24 voting members.

The recommendations from the Executive Board to accept the Standing Rules and the Agenda were approved unanimously.

Carol Winter was appointed as parliamentarian.

The committees of the convention were also approved as appointed by the president.

As Jean Crumb was elected for a two-year term last year there was no need to elect a president.

First Ballotting for Vice President

There were no written nominations submitted for Vice President. Karen McAfee gave instructions for the first ballot for Vice President. This will be done by ecclesiastical ballot. Of the 24 ballots, 16 are needed to elect a vice president.

- Peggy Bohart received 7 votes,
- Carol Bartol 1
- Linda Leister 1
- Shirley Nipple 1
- Fran Blatchley 1
- Carol Winter 1
- Doris Mertz 3

Others receiving votes but declining for various reasons were Sue Baylor, Robin Latsha, Sue Neitz, and Georgette Copp.

While the votes were being counted we were honored to hear greetings from our Bishop, the Rev. Barbara J. Collins who spoke again on the theme of “All Anew”. She also offered prayer in our proceedings to elect a Vice President. We also heard greetings from our Church-wide representative, Dawn Smith.

Second ballot for Vice President was then conducted.

- Peggy Bohart received 16 votes,
- Doris Mertz 6,
- Carol Winter 1 and
- Sue Neitz 1.

With 16 votes being what was necessary to elect, Peggy Bohart was elected as our new Vice President.

While the ballots were being counted, Robin Latsha presented the Report of the Secretary.

Anne Spicer then took the Chair while Jean Crumb gave the Report of the President.

Next reports were given on the various Mission Areas. Sue Baylor reported on Mission:Action Committee, Kathy Whitesel reported on Mission:Community Committee and Robin Latsha reported on Mission:Growth Committee.

Linda Leister then recognized our past presidents and offered prayer.

Carol Winter spoke on the passing of our Vice President, Grace Lucas. She was so involved in the Women’s Organization and put her heart and soul into the group. We will miss her very much, but her legacy will go forward as we strive to live up to her commitment to the Women of the ELCA.

We then collected the Mission Ingathering monies for LTI (Lutheran Training Institute) and had a closing prayer by Kathy Whitesel.
End of First Business Meeting
• The group then split up into two groups. One group met with Jodi Ellis for Bible Study and the other met with Sandy Nelson to hear about her trip to Liberia.
• We then enjoyed a delicious lunch of various sandwiches, potato and/or broccoli and cheese soup, rolls, fruit cup, pastries and assorted desserts.

Second Business Meeting
• The second business meeting was opened with prayer by Dawn Smith, our Church-wide representative.
• Sue Baylor reported as the committee on credentials. It was determined there were 16 delegates, 3 officers, 5 board members, 18 participants and 7 guests for a total of 49 in attendance.
• Kathy Whitesel then reported for the Committee on Nominations. We would have first ballot for office of Treasurer, Secretary and Executive Board. Wendy Zajac was willing to run for Treasurer. Robin Latsha was willing to run for a second term as secretary. Kathy Whitesel and Doris Mertz were willing to run for board members. Ballots were cast for all three.
• Wendy received 24 ballots and was elected as Treasurer.
• Robin Latsha received 23 votes for secretary and Nancy Lucas received one vote.
• Robin was elected as secretary.
• Kathy received 18 votes and Doris received 6 votes and both were elected as board members.
• As these votes were being tabulated, we heard a presentation by Dawn Smith, our church-wide representative. She had a very interesting presentation and was very appreciative of the work done by our organization. She asked if we could increase our giving to the national level as the cost of the triennial is a huge area of concern. She noted we have a good deal of money in our treasury and asked that we consider giving more to the national organization. Dawn was presented with a quilt made by the women at Port Royal.
• Presentation of Constitution Revisions: It was noted that constitutional changes are voted on at the triennial convention and are approved there.

Report on Committee of Reference and Council: Sue Baylor reported there were two resolutions submitted. The first resolution was submitted by the Mission Action Committee. This related to the Carol Main Scholarship Fund which has $4300 in it at this point. This was money that would go to the pastors’ wives in Liberia. In that donations have significantly decreased due to the fact many may not know who Carol Main is and also the Liberian women should have a say in how the money is spent, it was resolved that the USSWO should close out the fund within the next three years and the money be disbursed in 3 installments to the Lutheran Church in Liberia with Naomi Ford-Wilson to decide who gets the scholarships. She is to report back who received the scholarships and their progress.

The second resolution was submitted by Anne Spicer and was related to board representation. At this time a multiple church charge is considered to be a single unit and therefore can only send one delegate to attend the annual synod convention. Her recommendation was to allow each church in a multiple church unit be permitted to send a delegate from each church in the church unit to attend the annual synod convention and to increase the number of potential candidates for the executive board of the synod. This had also been brought up at the triennial convention in July and would need to be approved by the national executive board.

ADJOURNMENT OF SECOND BUSINESS MEETING
At this time we again has time for women to attend either the workshop with Sandy Nelson on her trip to Liberia or the Bible Study with Jodi Ellis.

THIRD BUSINESS MEETING
We had opening devotions by Anne Spicer and sang “Shine Jesus Shine.”
Report on Committee of Credentials by Sue Baylor.
• There were 16 delegates, 3 officers, 5 board members, 19 participants and 6 guests for a total of 49.
• The Accountant’s report was available in the report. The executive board recommended that the report of the accounting firm, Miller-Gentry be accepted. Motion made and passed.
• The report of the treasurer was presented by Kathy Whitesel. The executive board recommended that the proposed budget for 2016-2017 be adopted. Motion made and passed.
Jean then commented on the triennial that she, Kathy and Robin attended. It was an awesome experience and recommended that others attend in the future. In 2020 it will be held in Phoenix, Arizona.

Georgette Cobb then spoke regarding the “Gather” magazine and urged everyone to subscribe.

Sue Baylor then spoke on the Committee of Reference and Council and also the Committee on Credentials. Linda Leister commented on the Committee on Offerings. The freewill offering totaled $561.35, the In-Gathering offering totaled $831.50 and the In-Kind Offering totaled $427.50 for a total of $1820.35 in offerings for the convention.

Recognition of Outgoing Board Members and Officers: Dawn Smith, Church-wide Representative recognized Karen McAfee as an outgoing executive board member.

SERVICE OF RECOGNITION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS/BOARD
Dawn Smith, Church-wide Executive Board Representative then installed the officers and executive board members for 2017/2018.

- Jean Crumb, President;
- Peggy Bohart, Vice President;
- Robin Latsha, Secretary;
- Wendy Zajac, Treasurer,
- Board Members, Kathy Whitesel, Doris Mertz, Linda Leister, Anne Spicer, Janet Dietrich, and Carol Winter.

President Jean Crumb then led the “Order for Closing of Convention.”

Respectfully submitted, Robin Latsha, Secretary

What You Should Know About Kathy Whitesel

Forty years ago I met my husband, Jeff. We are both Juniata County natives, from opposite ends of the county. We have two sons, Adam and Chad. Adam is married to Sharon and has three fabulous children Josie, Krista and Addison. Chad lives in Morrisville PA and works at Amazon.

Over the years Jeff and I have hosted two exchange students. First we had Orietta (1998-1999) who was originally from Bolivia but has been living in Germany for the last 12 years. Jiri aka George (2005-2006) is from the Czech Republic. George got married in April 2016 to Maria, who has family ties from Russia. Ori & I attended the wedding just outside of Prague. The 13 hour celebration was in Czech and translated into Russian. (That’s when you learn that a smile will take you a long way.) In March of this year they added a baby girl, Julia, to the family. Even though we get lots of pictures I can’t wait to meet her. Because we’ve hosted exchange students, I now have lots of chances to travel and I take as many as possible.

Among my favorite things, is spending time with young people. Jeff says I’m happiest when I’m hanging out with kids. That’s probably one of the reasons I’ve been involved with the youth of St. Stephen’s for the last 25 years. I’m not sure what that says about me. hmmm Additionally, I enjoy participating in short term mission trips. Group Workcamps are a passion of mine. Most every year, since 2000, I have looked forward to taking a group of teenagers somewhere in the USA. These weeks of intense work and fellowship are amazing experiences! The WELCA at St. Stephen’s is a busy group although small in number. It’s my goal to get younger ladies involved. I’m searching for something that will intrigue them and haven’t come up with it yet but I’m not giving up.

Prior to becoming Treasurer of the USSWO I was not involved with WELCA outside of St. Stephen’s. So let me take this opportunity to say it’s been fun getting to know everyone. By the way, I’m fortunate enough to be serving as a Board member for 2 more years.
Letter from the Editor

- Kathy Whitesel

“The Reformation caused a lot of change!” That was the crux of Bishop Emeritus Robert Driesen’s presentation to the members (and spouses) of the WELCA unit of Messiah, South Williamsport, as they gathered for an Indoor (Garage) Picnic on September 18th. Bishop Driesen continued … Martin Luther’s compelling need to oppose Indulgences came from his anguish over his parishioners who “waved their (Indulgences) papers” and declared that they no longer needed to confess their sins and make expiation … they were freed from Purgatory!! The Ninety-five Theses—written in Latin—were Luther’s invitation to fellow scholars to debate not only the problems caused by Indulgences and holy relics but also that of the “authority of the Pope” to grant forgiveness. If the Pope could—through the purchase of Indulgences—remit/remove time in Purgatory, Luther wrote, why could he not simply grant full pardons to everyone??? And “free” pardons! Or use his own wealth to build St. Peter’s???

Many of the changes/reforms that Martin Luther espoused have come to fruition in the past fifty years, Bishop Driesen stated. The Catholic Mass is no longer in Latin but in the language of the people … Communicants are allowed to have both elements … Roman Catholics have joined Lutherans in a “Declaration of Justification” … the excommunication edict has been withdrawn … the denunciations rescinded.

Personally, I see a lot of changes, too. I grew up in a Catholic neighborhood—three blocks from Sacred Heart Church and School in Kitchener, Ontario. My playmates were all Catholics and, one day, they told me to “Go home!” and not to play with them anymore … so I went, crying, to my parents and said, “I want to be a Catholic!” Of course, this never happened and we did become playmates again, but it just wasn’t the same … I still didn’t really belong! Have you ever had that feeling?

So much has changed. Today we live together—side-by-side with other religious/non-religious people—and the “wall” that used to exist between Lutherans and Catholics has been torn down.

But new “walls” have been built … the wall of race and color … the wall of nationality and immigrant status … the wall of indifference to the opioid crisis and other health issues … the wall of isolationism!

Let us build bridges! Let us seek understanding and provide guidance through the maze of life as we live it today. Our WELCA units can be sources of inspiration and information to help others. Let’s do it!

Treasurers Tidbits

- Kathy Whitesel

At the Board meeting, on September 23rd, a motion was made by Peggy Bohart and seconded by Anne Spicer to send $1000 to Lutheran Disaster Response for Hurricane Relief, motion carried.

Events coming up:

October 1st - Blanket Sunday (Monetary donations are needed to pay shipping expenses.)
October 7th – Women’s Fall Retreat at Camp Mt. Luther (9:45 – 3:00) – Christine Mabon will present: Renew- Restore- Revitalize
October 14th – Blanket Drop off at Buffalo Valley Commons
October 21st – Action Day at the Synod Office (11:00 – 1:00) Bring a bagged lunch. Drink and desserts will be provided. Ryan Versluis will be sharing information about the Stephen Ministry.
SYNODICAL WOMEN’S ORGANIZATION 2017-2018
EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT – Jean Crumb, 239 Railroad Street, Bloomsburg, Pa. 17815
Phone 570-784-3352 (home); 570-441-9993 (cell); email jcduner@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT – Peggy Bohart, 1669 Dauber Road, Cogan Station, Pa. 17728
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SECRETARY – Robin Latsha, 507 Slutter Valley Road, Dornsife, Pa. 17823
Phone 570-758-4610 (home); 570-556-7691 (cell); email rlatsha@tds.net

TREASURER – Wendy Zajac, 792 Hetlerville Road, Nescopeck, Pa. 18635 (Term begins February 2018)
Phone 570-759-1304 (home); 570-336-7023 (cell); email wzajac61@gmail.com

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Mission: Growth – Robin Latsha and Janet Dietrich
Mission: Community – Kathy Whitesel and Linda Leister

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Phone 570-275-2110 (church); email pinestch@ptd.net
2017 BLANKET SUNDAY
LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF PROJECT REPORT

Church____________________________________________________________
Address___________________________________________________________
Pastor____________________________________________________________
Contact Person______________________________________________________
Congregation Number__________________
Conference/Cluster____________________(Not Synod)

Indicate NUMBER of items sent: (Do not include money donated)
1. _____ Blankets
2. _____ Quilts
3. _____ School Kits
4. _____ Fabric Kits
5. _____ Pounds of new wrapped soap.
(Pack no heavier than 20 lbs. Per box.)
6. _____ Personal Care Kits
7. _____ Baby Care Kits
8. _____ Pieces of fabric (3 yds. or more cotton or cotton blend not in sewing kits)

PLEASE SEND THIS COMPLETED REPORT (as soon after October 6 as possible)
To: Elizabeth Baylor
364 Kaseville Rd.
Danville, PA 17821
Phone 570 279-4766

For your convenience this sheet may be turned in at the Depot site.

BLANKET SUNDAY OFFERINGS: Make check payable to: Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA. Designate “Blankets”

MAIL TO: ELCA Upper Susquehanna Synod, P.O. Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837
UPPER SUSQUEHANNA SYNODICAL
WOMEN’S ORGANIZATION

Contact Information Form
CONGREGATIONAL/INTER CONGREGATIONAL UNIT

Please complete and return to:
Elizabeth Baylor
364 Kaseville Rd
Danville, PA 17821

Name of Congregation
Address
President

Name_______________________ Date Installed_____________________________
Address______________________________________________________________
City___________________________________Zip___________________________
Phone_________________ Email__________________________________________

Vice President

Name_______________________ Date Installed_____________________________
Address______________________________________________________________
City___________________________________Zip___________________________
Phone_________________ Email__________________________________________

Secretary

Name_______________________ Date Installed_____________________________
Address______________________________________________________________
City___________________________________Zip___________________________
Phone_________________ Email__________________________________________

Treasurer

Name_______________________ Date Installed_____________________________
Address______________________________________________________________
City___________________________________Zip___________________________
Phone_________________ Email__________________________________________