

Our Story

On May 15, 1914, in Knox Church, Toronto, three organizations united to form the Women's Missionary Society, Western Division, of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Each of these organizations had evolved from specific missions and involved women from Quebec to British Columbia.

In 1864 the Ladies Auxiliary Association formed in Montreal to assist the Church of Scotland in work among the French. As the work expanded to include "Home, French and Foreign Work" the name of this organization was changed twice and finally became the Woman's Missionary Society, Montreal.

In 1876 in Toronto the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was founded to assist the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church in the work among women and children in the foreign mission field, which then included work in Western Canada among the First Nations and newcomers from Europe.

The Women's Home Missionary Society was organized in 1903. This Society grew out of the Atlin Nurses' Committee, which, in 1898 had answered the need for nursing service in the Klondike. The Women's Home Missionary Society opened and supported hospitals in remote areas of Canada and developed educational and social service work. Deaconesses were trained and sent to work among settlers in Western Canada and immigrants in cities from Toronto to Vancouver. Clothing and other supplies were gathered and sent to people in need across the country.

In 1972 the mission work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Women's Missionary Society was integrated.

WMS now fulfils their purpose by supporting the missions of the Church through promotion of mission, study and prayer. Their grants to the greater Church and to support regional staff are vital to the work of the Church.

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INTRODUCING

THE WMS



**The Women's Missionary Society
The Presbyterian Church in Canada**



**The Women's Missionary Society
is a community of Christians
whose purpose,
in response to the love of God
in Jesus Christ,
is to encourage one another
and all the people of the church
to be involved
in local and world mission
through prayer, study, service
and fellowship**



The Staff

The Society employs national executive and office support staff, and contributes to the salaries of regional staff. **National Staff** consists of the Executive Secretary, Book Room Manager, Editor of *Glad Tidings* and Program Secretary. They provide leadership and resources for the organizational and educational activities of the Society and act as liaison with agencies and committees of the church and with national bodies of other organizations. They are supported by the Circulation Manager of the *Glad Tidings*, the Financial Officer, and other support staff as required.

Regional Staff are employees of the Synod/Synodicals. WMS contributes to 7/12th of their salaries. Regional staff provide education and leadership training programs for the Society as well as leadership in Christian education, new church development, camping and youth ministry for the Church.

Publications

- ***Glad Tidings*** is the official magazine of the Society.
- ***Annual Report*** is published in book form each year following the Council meeting. It contains the minutes of the Council meeting; financial statements and auditor's reports; reports on the work of the Society; and the names and addresses of presbyterial, synodical and Council officers.
- ***Stories of Mission*** are the reports of the work of the ministers and missionaries of Canada Ministries and International Ministries.

The Book Room

The Book Room stocks program materials, books and other resources. In addition to servicing WMS local groups, presbyterials and synodicals, **The Book Room** is now amalgamated with the Resource Distribution Centre and serves people that represent every aspect of the church's life and activity.

Organizational Structure

The Women's Missionary Society is an autonomous lay organization within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada approves the constitution of the Society and receives an annual report of its work.

The WMS Council Executive names representatives to the Assembly Council, the Life and Mission Agency Committee, and two standing committees of General Assembly: Ecumenical Relations and International Affairs; and other committees from time to time

The local group in the local congregation is the mainstay of the Society. Beyond the local group the administrative structure of the Society parallels that of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Members (*Active and Associate*) participate in local groups in congregations.

Presbyterials

- bring together delegates from their local groups
- assist, advise and encourage local groups
- receive group reports and report to presbytery and synodical
- send recommendations and resolutions to Council
- receive the money from local groups and forward it to the general budget of the WMS (WD)

Synodicals

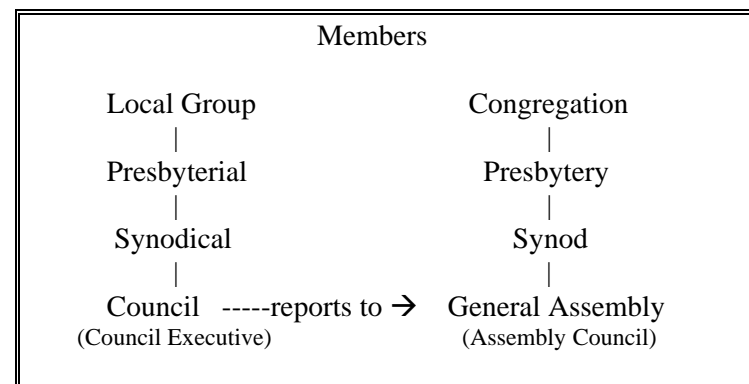
- bring together representatives of presbyterials
- assist, advise and encourage presbyterial officers
- receive presbyterial reports and report to Council Executive and synod
- the synodical president/coordinator sits on Council Executive
- send delegates to Council
- send recommendations and resolutions to Council

Council Executive

- administers the work of the Society
- co-operates with church committees and agencies in support of mission and Christian education
- is responsible for the oversight of the *Glad Tidings* magazine, *The Book Room*, the national executive and support staff
- maintains contact with regional staff
- reports to Council

Council - the legislative body of the Society

- meets annually
- consists of synodical delegates and council executive
- receives reports from council executive
- sets financial estimates including the amount of the grant to the Life and Mission Agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- receives recommendations and resolutions from presbyterials synodicals and Council Executive
- makes all policy decisions
- elects and installs the Council Executive
- reports to General Assembly



WMS Terminology

The General Fund - is made up of the financial contributions from local groups which are sent through presbyterials to the Treasurer of the Society.

This fund is used for:

- contributions to the Church toward national and international ministries
- grants for Christian literature
- salaries and expenses of the executive staff and support staff
- contributions toward the salaries and expenses of regional staff
- general expenses of the Society

Estimates - Each year the WMS Finance Committee presents Financial Estimates to the Council meeting. The estimates approved by the Council are printed in the January-February issue of the *Glad Tidings*.

Objectives - Each year synodicals set a financial objective in consultation with presbyterials and local groups. The process for meeting the objective is agreed upon by synodical and presbyterials.

Friendship and Service - is a program by which local groups take the responsibility of contacting new people in the community and people who are sick or shut-in. Through this program members and groups become involved in community services such as the Red Cross, food banks, meals on wheels, hospital auxiliaries, shelters, etc.

Associate Member - is a person in a congregation who is in sympathy with the aim and purpose of the Society but does not attend meetings.

An Overview of the WMS

To carry out the purpose of the WMS, local groups have been established in congregations from Quebec to British Columbia.

Local Groups

- Meet regularly for study, prayer and service.
- Learn about the Church's mission using the annual mission study, the *Glad Tidings* magazine and other resources from *The Book Room*.
- Are informed about current and relevant materials through a yearly mailing and the *Glad Tidings*.
- Study, pray for, serve and support the mission of the church and those engaged in it.
- Regularly respond to needs of the congregation or community.
- Develop fellowship and leadership skills as members participate in the local group, presbyterial and synodical meetings and events.
- Serve the Church through contributions to the General Fund of the Society .

