IT'S A NEW YEAR!

Dear Consultation of Religious Communities members and friends,

Happy New Year to each of you! As we have ended one year and look to another, may we be ever mindful of our many blessings, including the presence of the CRC in our community. In this new beginning, and as I end my one year term as president, I am reminded of the joy and privilege we share in being able to help others through the CRC, by giving of ourselves, our time and our possessions.

In the past year a little more than $42,000 was given to the Common Fund, which helps many who face eviction, remain safe and secure in their homes. (This surpassed our goal of $36,000) The Winter Outerwear Clothing Drive helped approximately 1400 persons receive coats and other warm clothing to help get through this cold Iowa winter. The Center for Worker Justice continues to help low wage workers, regardless of race, ethnicity, or immigration status achieve social and economic justice. This past May they also assisted, and continue to do so, the 20 plus persons from Mt. Pleasant that were detained by ICE. And the Inside Out Reentry program helps formerly incarcerated persons build a new life in our community. The Gifts for Parents Event did not occur in 2018, but we are on track for a great event on December 7 of this year. All of these programs and events, and many more, are sponsored or supported by the CRC with volunteer hours and financial resources. Thanks to all of you for your support and involvement in all these efforts.

We have accomplished a great deal in 2018 and we will continue our support of the projects and programs we have been involved in, but it is exciting to think about what we can do in the coming year. One "new" project we look forward to is an Interfaith Build of two Habitat homes. Watch for information about this soon and ways you can be involved. Maybe you are not a tool kind of person, but perhaps you can provide food or snacks for those who are, or discover you have new or hidden talents in construction! Or maybe you can donate books or time to the Book Sale in March, or eat salads in the Spring or enjoy soups in November, all to benefit the Shelter House. If you are a walker or jogger, you can join the NAMI Walk on April 27, or contribute to it to help those who deal with mental illnesses. If "food" is your thing, or helping to make sure everyone has enough to eat, donations and preparation and serving assistance are always needed at the Free Lunch Program, or at Iowa City Compassion. Table to Table helps get surplus food from restaurants and grocery stores to places that can use it, relying mostly on volunteers and the Operation Backpack Program through HACAP, helps make sure school children have enough food for weekends. In addition to filling and delivery of the backpacks, it costs $200

per school year for each child. The Crisis Center is always looking for volunteers, as well as donations, in a variety of areas and skill sets. Contact them and they will gratefully find a spot for you to give of your time.

Whew! The list goes on and on and on. There is no shortage of places to go to give of yourself, or programs and events to participate in. The CRC will continue to keep you informed of ways to help others and to be involved. Please also let us know about things you are planning as well.

Thank you again for all that you have done in 2018 to work with and support the CRC, and help many in our midst. With all of us working together I am confident 2019 will be another year filled with helping others on their life's journeys. As we walk in accompaniment with them I know we will all be blessed as well.

I have appreciated the opportunity to serve as president of the CRC this past year, and I am grateful for all your help and support. As Pastor Jill Cameron Michel takes over as our leader in mid-January I am confident we will all offer her that same support and look forward to what her leadership brings to us.

And now may we all go forth in peace and remember those who need our help.

Roxene Redenius, 2018 CRC President