

Mothers' Union Diocese of Lichfield e-newsletter

July 2015

Issue 24

God Blessed us with a glorious day, the sun shone, people relaxed and picnicked, children played games and blew bubbles, your diocesan president went on the bouncy slide, the worldwide president joined in a drumming workshop, and she was a farmer during the worship and we all had lots of fun.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make it so very good.



I will be adding lots more photos to an album on our Facebook page very soon.

Join us at Lichfield Mothers' Union



Mothers' Union Office

The Parish Church of St Thomas and St Andrew
Doxey, Stafford. ST16 1EQ

Telephone 01785 227221

Email office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk

www.mothersunionlichfield.org.uk

The 2015 Mothers' Union General Meeting

Lynne Tembey, Worldwide President, opened the meeting with her address, introduction and welcome. She gave us a review of 2014/2015 and spoke encouragingly of our growing membership worldwide and building relationships with many more provinces around the globe. In October she welcomed Provincial Presidents from around the world to a meeting in London. There was much joy and shared fellowship and at the end of the conference all 26 provinces represented signed a statement that affirmed our three strands of work: **praying, enabling and campaigning, which articulated a determination to be united by our faith to achieve our goals.**



During the year the worldwide Trustee Board completed an in-depth re-evaluation of our work: our strategy, our governance and our stewardship and to develop plans to fulfil our mission to enable family life to flourish and setting our goals for the next 5 years.

A presentation was given by Bill Crooks and Jackie Mouradian from "Mosaic Creative" who have worked with many groups both in the UK and around the world. Mosaic Creative helps people to deal with isolation, powerlessness, vulnerability, spiritual poverty, physical weakness and material poverty; using art, drama, adult learning and showing ways to bring the Bible alive. This involved a monologue from Jackie – "Touching the Cloak" – a story from the Bible we are all familiar with.

After lunch "Beyond the Branch" presentations were given by the leaders of Action & Outreach, Jane Groves Head of Britain and Ireland and Nicola Lawrence Head of International. Reg Bailey gave his last Annual Review which touched on many subjects but he emphasised that at the heart of our work **is our prayer life** which binds us together as nothing else can. **Couple our prayer life with our campaigning** and we begin to see how we can multiply our efforts. Reg said he is especially proud of our initiatives highlighting gender based violence and our continuing work on the sexualisation of childhood. The third piece of the jigsaw is **enabling members** to identify not just the needs of their community to strengthen relationships and build family life but to recognise that so often the skills and experience to address these issues lie with their own communities. Millions of our members and supporters are actively involved in promoting stable relationships through marriage, supporting families and nurturing faith all over the world.

Jane Fearnley-Whittingstall, who is the mother of Hugh the well-known chef, gave us her keynote address on Generation to Generation with lots of humour that we could all relate to. She talked about her own family from great-grand parents to her own grand-children and about the importance of talking to children and grand-children about family history and your memories.

Reg Bailey's Farewell – Are We There Yet? – This is a question that we can all relate to from children and grand-children. Reg was of course talking about the work of MU – and as you would probably expect his answer was NO! The reason behind this, as we all know, is that there is still much to do, but he continued to thank us for all the projects we are involved with. Reg has been CEO for 16 years with MU and said that he is proud to have been part of this organisation in everything that we have been able to achieve together. Lynne Tembey thanked Reg and presented him cards and a leaving present. No doubt he will still be a member and give his support.

Closing worship – The Rt. Revd. Tony Porter, Bishop of Sherwood – he left us with this thought – **Preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary use words!**

Thank you so much to Chris Miller for this report which really captured the essence of the day

Mapping the Future Conference 6-7th June 2015

The conference was organised to consider the views of younger/newer members of Mothers' Union and provide information about the work of the organisation. It was held at Launde Abbey in Leicestershire a most beautiful and tranquil retreat centre.

Saturday's session began with an act of worship and prayers. Lynne Tembey our Worldwide President shared with us - she talked about her MU journey and her current role, using personal stories to illustrate: the privilege and joy of sharing with members on a trip to New Zealand and Tonga and several encounters on trains, the latter demonstrating the reach of MU into people's lives.

Then followed a session of activities, including the opportunity for a personal and prayerful response to each as well as discussion in our groups, to raise our awareness of Mothers' Union and all that is going on:

CAMPAIGNING: considering the Bye Buy Childhood and Labelled for Life materials.

COMMUNITIES: looking at the 'Inspired' materials and how MU branches and members reach out into and work in their local areas.

FAMILY SPIRITUALITY: looking at the Hand in Hand publication and discussing our own local responses to this.

MEMBERSHIP: more 'Inspired' ideas and discussion about our own experiences of different ways of being MU.

WORLDWIDE: a map of the world and stories about MU and its activities around the globe.

The afternoon ended with a 'Faith in the Family' reflection based on Mark 10:13-16 and John 6:5-11.

After dinner there were opportunities for informal chatting in the bar or an after dinner game in small groups. Both provided time to get to know each other better, share our personal MU journeys, develop links with each other and share ideas. The evening ended with Lynne leading us in Compline - a peaceful and reflective way to end the day.

Sunday began with Eucharist in the chapel led by the Revd. Alison Christian (warden of Launde Abbey) who shared her own experiences of the work of Mothers' Union in Mozambique.

The day's sessions began with an activity exploring how and why we had become members of MU. The most important factor that came out of this exercise was the hugely influential role of the personal invitation and the importance of inviting and accompanying someone to their first meeting. It also became apparent that many of us were motivated by the ideas of service and volunteering. One person coined the phrase "Guiding for grown-ups!"

Then followed discussion in small groups, using three questions to prompt and provoke:

- What do you **GAIN** from being a member; what do you like and value about your membership? *Responses included: "Families First" magazine; credibility in a community; bigger than the local church and appeals to non-Christians too; enlarging horizons; shared values; praying and prayed for; political lobbying at local and global level (presence at UN); meeting maturer members.*
- What would you **CHANGE**? *Responses included: the image; the rigidity of structures and procedures; raise the profile; consider the name - issues around perceptions about inclusivity; more support for families with teenagers and especially church youth workers.*
- How could you do things **DIFFERENTLY**? *Responses included: "E" meetings (via email/social media) and impromptu - "let's meet tomorrow" etc; meet in the pub; prayer walks; meetings around shared meals.*

Our final group session was entitled "Dreaming Dreams" - if we were to set up a brand new Christian organisation to support and nurture family relationships what areas would be most important; what mix of prayer/practical action would it need; publicity and recruitment? Our discussion considered inclusivity and removing barriers, using social media, local events, skills audits and how we could simply phrase our purpose.

The conference finished with closing worship and more sharing/networking over lunch.

There is so much to think about and process from the conference! It was an amazing opportunity to share with other members from around the Canterbury Province and to find out so much more about the work and organisation of MU. Thank you Lichfield Diocese Mothers' Union for sending me - I have returned re-inspired and encouraged - there is still so much the MU can do, but also how amazing it is when we think about and reflect on all that we are already doing.

Thank you Helen Davies for sharing your experiences with us

Mothers' Union Diocese of Lichfield e-newsletter

July 2015

Issue 24



An Invitation to all members and friends to;

Rugeley Deanery Festival Service on 15th September at 2.30pm in St Luke's Church Cannock, followed by refreshments in the church centre.

The church building is 900 years old this year and the deanery service is one part of the many celebrations that are being held during the year.

If you are thinking of taking a group of people please contact Madeline via the office email – as this will help with catering etc.

What have you been doing this summer to celebrate Mothers' Union?

Have you had a Garden Party, an Afternoon tea, a Special Church Service – please email your photos to the office so that they can be included in a future issue.



Receiving the newsletter

If you do not wish to receive the newsletter in the future please email the office and you will be removed from the mailing list

If your friends, family or other members would like to receive the newsletter please email the office with their details and they will be added to the mailing list

office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk



at
Lichfield Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union Office

The Parish Church of
St Thomas and St Andrew
Doxey, Stafford. ST16 1EQ
Telephone 01785 227221

Email

office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk

www.mothersunionlichfield.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 249942