

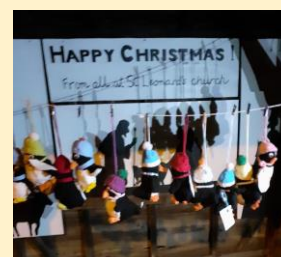


to the last newsletter of 2021.

Dear friends and fellow members of Mothers' Union

As we come to the end of this year, and indeed the end of the Triennium, it may be a good time to look back to see that there is much to give thanks for as well as much to be sorrowful about. There can be no disagreement that it has been a time like no other, with the world in the grip of a disease that, just when we think we may be getting on top of the situation, surprises us with a new twist. As I write we are faced with the possibility of some restrictions over the Christmas period, even if they are not formally declared as guidelines. Our hope seems to lie in vaccination, and we give thanks for the skill of the scientists and the dedication of the staff and volunteers willing to work long hours to ensure the programme reaches as many people as possible. In my own church some of the services over the Christmas season have been curtailed, especially those which are less formal such as Messy Nativity and the Crib and Gift services. We usually welcome a number of families which does make proceedings quite chaotic, and it is a such shame that it is felt unwise to proceed with them. We had a very successful Christmas Tree Festival at the beginning of December with over 70 trees, including one for Mothers' Union. Around 60 prayer tags were hung on the tree, and these were offered up at the branch Advent Service last week. Janet of Wigginton Branch has sent in the picture of some of the 902 knitted penguins distributed throughout the village! Coven group had a teddy tombola which raised £95 and then gave 16 MUMbags to a centre for vulnerable mums in Wolverhampton. It all raises the profile of Mothers; Union.

I hope you managed to watch the Carol Service from the chapel at Mary Sumner House. It was shown live on the Facebook on Wednesday 15th December but is still available on Facebook or the YouTube channel. Just search for Mothers' Union and then either Facebook or YouTube.



On behalf of the Trustees, I want to thank you all for your support and prayers over the last three years and all you have done in the name of Mothers' Union. We pray you have a blessed Christmas and send every good wish for a happy and healthy 2022.
God Bless.

Helen

Subscription for 2022.

This has been set at £27.50 and it is hoped that those of you who are subscribing members will feel able to continue to support the work done by Mothers' Union here in Lichfield Diocese as well as worldwide by renewing your membership. Please feel free to contact the office (office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk) if you have any queries. Branch and group leaders/contacts and treasurers will receive the paperwork for 2022 as soon as possible in the new year.

Christmas Cards – a big Thank you!

Due to the efforts of Julia Collinson, Christmas cards written by you, our members, have been sent once again to prison chaplains for distribution to prisoners across our diocese. Julia tells us that this year's response from chaplains has been more enthusiastic than last year – when we were, to be fair, in thick of our third covid-19 lockdown. Nearly two thousand cards have been dispatched for this season.

As we packed, we sorted too. Regrettably some cards had become damp while in storage and have had to be put in the recycling bin. Others have been repacked and stored once again. We would estimate that there are over 1500 written cards remaining.

Consequently, we thank you all for your writing of greetings cards with such loving care and prayerfulness. As we go into 2022, I would humbly suggest that each member writes no more than three cards. In this way we will not waste resources and be left with many boxes to store.

Katherine May

General Trustee in Salop Archdeaconry

PS: As I write I ponder and muse about what else or where else we might send greetings cards during the season?

It occurs to me that our indoor members and church members living in residential care may be uplifted by the receiving of an MU card. Perhaps your church clergy or lay ministry team takes communion to a local residential home – in which case you might ask if cards would be appreciated.

Connected Magazine

Katherine says 'I noticed that Oxford Diocese MU members send Easter cards to detainees in prisons in that diocese. I wonder what you think about our MU members adding that activity to our usual work?'

We hope that that all of you who are subscribing members of Mothers' Union will have received the Autumn edition of *Connected* and also the Prayer Diary for 2022. Please contact the office if any previous problems have not been corrected.

A message from Nikki Sweatman, Worldwide Trustee representing Canterbury Province

As I near the end of this triennium as a worldwide trustee for 6 years, and as provincial president for 4 years and 3 months, I want to thank you for:

- the privilege of being given the opportunity to serve in this way.
- the smiles and welcomes when I've visited or when we've gathered together at Conferences
- the encouragement to 'keep going'
- the cups of coffee / tea / cake / meals
- the accommodation offered in your own homes
- your trust in sharing concerns both personal and those about MU
- sticking with it all when the workload was tough and sometimes overwhelming
- the prayer times together
- and the prayer support for my work
- the laughter and tears shared
- for being honest when you felt things were not right
- for all the work you have done, and continue to do for MU
- and for being a member and encouraging each other in faith and friendship

May you have a Blessed Christmas, and may the Peace and Joy of knowing our saviour remain with you through the coming years. I know you will continue to step out in faith, some of you in continuing roles and others in a different way.

With my love and prayers,
Nikki

At this time of the year I start to fill in next year's calendar and, though essential, it can look a little depressing. Birthdays, anniversaries, appointments, meetings, even bills. But during lock down I discovered something different.....Action for Happiness. You may have seen that I post the month's calendar on Facebook, or the one that Katherine printed out at council.

I realised then I plan many things each day, meals, outings, shopping, prayer but never happiness. The Happiness Calendar reminds me to take time to think about this - not just thinking of others but me too and taking some guilt out of taking time for me,

Do Good December, Active April or Self-care September, take a look at the App. You may just find more to look forward too. ACTION FOR HAPPINESS.

Deb Tudor

Commissioning Service 2022

It is confirmed that the service for the Commissioning of the Trustees, Chaplains and other officers will be held in Lichfield Cathedral on Saturday 26th March 2022. The service will be Evensong at 17.30 and the Bishop of Stafford, Rt Revd Matthew Parker will preach and carry out the commissioning. For many reasons there will be no Mothers' Union Choir this time, but we pray that we shall still be able to make a glorious noise to celebrate and give thanks to God.



The Great Sock Appeal



It all started with a speaker from the Salvation Army visiting Penkridge branch of Mothers Union to talk about their school uniform initiative, supporting those in need by supplying over 700 sets of school uniform for the Autumn term.

THE RESULT: **407** pairs of new school socks! A big thank you to all members of the Mothers Union for their donations and "making it happen", together with the Harvest All Age Worship congregation who helped swell the pairs collected. A big thank you to everyone; 407 times over!

The Audley Chain!

Members in Audley have been knitting links for the anti-slavery chain! At the last count it was 15 metres long -and still growing!



Midday prayers are also available on the Daily Hope line by selecting option **5** followed by option **9**

(Please note the change of option)

16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence



Shrewsbury St Giles #No More 1in3



Wigginton Prayer Table

Branches across the diocese came together to pray during the 16 days of Activism against Gender Based violence.

'St Giles, Shrewsbury, MU members met on Saturday 27 November to pray together and to make our own #NoMore1in3 hashtag posters. We took a photograph to upload on our Lichfield MU Facebook page and agreed to stick our #NoMore1in3 hashtag signs in our street-facing windows if at all possible.'

The time of action and prayer began on 25th November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ended on 10th December, International Human Rights Day. This is an annual worldwide campaign with Mothers' Union joining over 6,000 organisations from 180 or more countries to raise awareness of, and call for an end to, gender-based violence and abuse in all forms and all societies.

Members were invited to use a specially issued prayer diary, meet together, hold special services, or simply wear a purple scarf to show support.

Diocesan Chaplains

Rev Jassica Castillo-Burley	Interim Minister, Telford interimteamvicar@gmail.com	01952 957348
Rev Kathryn Trimby	Llanyblodwel, Oswestry Deanery kathpant@aol.com	07944504330 01691 590025
Rev Chris Rushton	Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent Deanery chris-rushton@outlook.com	01782 410011

The office is closed over the Christmas break until
Tuesday 4th January 2022.

Depending on circumstances it is hoped that it may
reopen then, even if for only a couple of hours a week.
Please contact any of the trustees if you have any urgent
matters.