



Dear members and friends of Mothers' Union



How wonderful it is to see the signs of spring in our gardens! These are in my garden but the churchyard at St Michael's Penkridge where I worship, has an abundance of snowdrops in large drifts and small clumps in the little corners. Every year when flowering is over, the Rector (and helpers!) diligently divides them up so that the sea of white becomes larger as the years pass. As I write the daylight hours are becoming longer and even a bit warmer, although we never know what may be in store for us in a week or two!

2023 may prove to be a year of change for many of us. Mothers' Union here, nationally and globally, is facing many challenges, as are many other organisations in the charitable sector. Membership, and therefore income, is declining and the need for our work increases. But Mothers' Union members are resourceful and resilient, and I am sure we will do our utmost to continue to provide support for those in our communities who need that little bit extra. Please let us know through the office what you may be doing, or thinking of doing. If you have a project in mind and don't have the resources to get it off the ground, we may be able to help with a modest grant. Tell us about it!

Still on matters financial - many of you will know that our Finance Trustee and Treasurer, Celia has moved out of the Diocese. All day-to-day finance will now be dealt with through the office by Adrian, our Diocesan Administrator so please send all correspondence to Doxey. Celia will continue for the time being as Finance Trustee and Financial Advisor, but we need to be looking for someone with finance experience to succeed her in the not too distant future. If you know of someone who might be capable and interested, please ask them to get in touch for more information!

We all, of course, wish Celia and John every blessing on this new stage of their lives together. We shall miss them.

With love and prayers to you all

*Helen*

## Membership 2023

Thank you to all of you who have already renewed your membership of Mothers' Union in this Diocese by returning your membership forms and paying your subscription by cheque or through your bank. We appreciate that this is quite a big change for many of you who are members of a branch, but it is intended to take the pressure off treasurers especially where banks are imposing charges even on small accounts. The intention is to make finances easier in the future. There have been quite a few queries made, but we hope that we have been able to answer them satisfactorily. Subscriptions should be paid and forms returned to the office as soon as possible, but by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at the latest.

Thank you again for your continued support.

## Update on Prison Work from Julia Collinson

The Christmas cards for prisoners in our Diocese were hand delivered this year for the first time since the pandemic. Deb Tudor delivered to prisons in her area and Liz Binsley and I delivered the rest - which was quite an experience since it was my first time in a jail!

Helen and I attended a Zoom meeting hosted by Alison Fernandes (from Mary Sumner House) on MU live which documents the work done by MU across the UK and Ireland and plans are in place to open it up to MU Worldwide. The aim of the programme is to collect information of several of different categories to include AFIA, Advocacy (our campaigns), Crafting, Gifts of Love (things we make and/or donate), volunteering and Messy Church etc. It is intended that Diocesan Presidents will be responsible for the imputing of this information and I had the invitation to the meeting because Alison is the lead on Prisons, Communities of Interest of which I am a member.

On the 11th of January I attended a Zoom meeting of Prisons, Community of Interest with several other Diocesan representatives. We didn't get much further than introducing ourselves and saying briefly what MU did in the prisons in their own Diocese. I was surprised to find out just how much work other Diocese do in the prisons, far more than we do. I am sure our members do a lot more work in prisons than they are prepared to admit to but if any of our members do volunteer in any way please get in touch with me. Our next meeting of Prisons Communities of Interest is in May and I would love to be able to say how much more we do than I have in the past.

I would like to be able to give the young offenders at Swinfen prison decent bags for their belongings when they leave prison instead of a black plastic bag so if anyone has the skills to make a nice bag please get in touch.

## Annual Gathering York 2023

Tickets for the Annual Gathering 2023 at the York Barbican on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 are now on sale at £23.50 (no host city subsidy this year). The programme is in development and will focus on member stories and how we are working together to sustain and grow Mothers' Union into the future. Sheran Harper, our Worldwide President will be at the gathering and the Archbishop of York will be leading the celebratory service at York Minster that evening. The central webpage will be updated on a regular basis. Please go to

<https://www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023>

for all the information as it is added.

It is **strongly** recommended that if you require accommodation on the Thursday and/or Friday night, you book this as soon as possible, availability is high and rates are low at the moment. Travelodge is offering rooms from £70 per night - links can be found on the web page. The organising committee look forward to welcoming members to York for a packed programme of inspirational stories and information, fellowship, and worship. Book early to avoid disappointment.

The trustees did consider a 'block booking' of 10 tickets, but names and contact details have to be given at the time of booking so that idea could not be followed up! However, as the seating is unreserved, arrangements could be made to meet beforehand to be able to sit together. It was also decided to offer some financial help to allow the Diocesan Mothers' Union to be represented at this meeting.

Please contact the office for more information.

## Dates for the Diary

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April: Quiet Day at Shallowford. Leader still to be arranged.  
Please submit names to the office.

**NEW!** Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August, Mary Sumner Day.

The 12.30 Eucharist at Lichfield Cathedral will be themed around Mothers' Union as we commemorate our Founder. More details later.

# Wave of Prayer 2023

The time for Lichfield Diocese to take part in the Wave of Prayer is this week, from Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February to Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February. A timetable of 'slots' for branches and groups was sent out at the end of 2022, but can also be accessed on the website, as can the service sheet itself. As in previous years, Deb has put together the service which can be used individually or as a group in church or in homes. During this time we pray specifically for our prayer link dioceses, as we know they will be praying for us. We are also blessed by knowing that all other dioceses across the world are also praying for us. We have also included our friendship link with Matlosane in South Africa, remembering those Liz Binsley and Helen met when visiting in 2018.

Prayer Link Dioceses: Ankole Uganda, Karnataka India, Lainya South Sudan  
Abuja & Lagos West Nigeria

Each day a Wave of Prayer service will be available on Zoom, and you are welcome join if you can. Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> at 9.00am, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> at 12.00noon, Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> at 4.00pm  
The Zoom link is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/96271116191?pwd=ZUV4QWIwbmtucFpxYnlOZVhJM0dXdz09>

Meeting ID: 962 7111 6191

Passcode: 017458

The link will be sent separately as well, but if you cannot access the Zoom using the 'https' address then use the Meeting ID and password to log in instead.

## Prayers



The prayer link continues using Email, phone, WhatsApp.  
Just say how you want to be included.

To offer to be a 'pray-er' or request prayers for yourself, someone else or any situation, please contact Deb or the office.  
Details are below.

Let's share.

Deb : [debtudor@live.co.uk](mailto:debtudor@live.co.uk)

01543 382390

Office: [office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk](mailto:office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk)

01785 227221

Many thanks.

## *Making a Difference*

Following on from the 'Meeting Together' sessions in 2022, the trustees are planning a similar programme of events with the theme 'Making a Difference'. We shall be keeping in mind the ideas which came from the Re-imagining process last year.

The events will be planned to last 1½ - 2hours and be a mixture of getting to know one another, worship, learning from each other and fun! The session could be held in the morning, afternoon or evening (summer months!) in church, a hall or even in a house if a small group is involved.

If you, your branch, group or church would like to host a meeting please contact the office or the trustees for more information to offer a date, time and venue.

## #Wool for Wellness

The response to this appeal for woolly hats for farmers has been absolutely amazing! Thank you to everyone who has been involved. I now have more of the FCN helpline labels so will get those out to those who have indicated that they need some. If you have been knitting hats and have given them direct to a farmer, please let us know as it all contributes to the work of MU! I am happy to receive hats at my home address to pass on to the local FCN representative. Please contact the office if you need details.

More information can also be found at [fcn.org.uk/wool-and-wellness](http://fcn.org.uk/wool-and-wellness)

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Staffordshire County Show 2023

As in previous years Mothers' Union has been asked to help with the refreshments in the Churches' Tent at this event. The dates are Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May and Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June. A rota of time slots is set up and the length of each will depend on the number of volunteers! The more people available the less time per slot, giving you more time to enjoy the attractions of the show. Please think about helping with this outreach opportunity to engage with members of the public as well as clergy and other church members who are part of the team.

If you would like more information about what would be involved please contact Helen or the office.

### Diocesan Chaplains

Rev Jassica Castillo-Burley

Please note that Jassica's email is now:  
[interimteamvicar@gmail.com](mailto:interimteamvicar@gmail.com)

Rev Kathryn Trimby

Llanyblodwel, Oswestry Deanery  
[kathpant@aol.com](mailto:kathpant@aol.com) 07944 504330 01691 590025

Associate Diocesan Chaplain

Rev Chris Rushton [chris-rushton@outlook.com](mailto:chris-rushton@outlook.com)

Please remember that the Chaplains are there for every member, in every part of the Diocese.

### Diocesan Office – Normal Opening Times

The times when Adrian, Diocesan Administrator, will be available to take calls are:

Monday 9.30am – 1.30pm

Tuesday 10.30am – 2.30pm

Thursday 9.30am – 1.30pm

Mothers' Union Office, Parish Church of St Andrew and St Thomas,  
Doxey, Stafford, ST16 1EQ

Tel: 01785 227221 (answer machine available)

email: [office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk](mailto:office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk)

website: <https://mothersunionlichfield.org.uk>