

Newsletter

Lent 2024

Dear members and friends of Mothers' Union

First, belated New Year greetings! It seems no time since the start of 2024, and here we are, one week into Lent already! I do hope that you are all safe and well after the various extremes of weather we have had over the past few weeks.

I had a bit of a sabbatical over the festive season, spending Christmas with our daughter in the Northeast, driving north in one named storm and home the week after in the next! Not pleasant driving conditions, but all was well - and then a family weekend in January in the Lake District as my husband celebrated a 'tombola' birthday, one of those which ends in 0 or 5. (It was a 0!) The weather was fine that time! I know that many people have suffered damage from flood and high winds and pray for a speedy return to some sort of normality. And so back to work!

Soon we shall be looking to the future of Mothers' Union in this Diocese. There will be elections for Diocesan President and members of the trustee board towards the middle of the year. As you are aware we are working with a very small board and there will be some members not standing again, including me. It is a privilege to serve in this way and can be hard work, but also very rewarding. If you think you would like to know more about what is involved and how we work together, we are inviting any interested persons to attend a trustee meeting, either in person or by Zoom, as an observer. Our next meeting is Thursday 21st March at Doxey, with Zoom available. Please contact Adrian at the office, or me if you would like to know more.



Since the start of the year I have visited a couple of branches. At Great Haywood I observed at their AGM and then helped celebrate Branch Leader, Claire Hunt's 50 years of membership. Congratulations and cake were in order!

I was also at Cannock St Luke recently for a different reason. The branch was closing, but did so with a service of celebration of all



that has gone before and a vision of what may lie ahead. Rev Vicky Fleming's reflection was inspiring, focussing on the end of one thing becoming the beginning of something different. Many of the members are continuing their membership and support of Mothers' Union will go on, under the guidance of Madeline Farnell, just in a different way.

Thank you to all who have already renewed membership for 2024 - Adrian has been kept busy checking information already held on the databases and adding new members. We can't promise that the central database will be any more efficient in the next few months but we shall make every effort to keep our diocesan one as accurate as we can.

I wish you a blessed Lenten journey,
Love and Prayers

Helen

*A Reflection for February
from Jenny Barton, Zonal Trustee for the Province of Wales*



My Dear Friends,

I hope this finds you happy and content even if it is the middle of winter. I was just reading from Matthews Gospel and the passage I was reading was from chapter 5: 3-12 when Jesus is speaking to his disciples about true happiness. It got me thinking about how happy it makes me when I think about how fortunate I am to be a part of such a wonderful and loving organisation.

An organisation that sets out to work for peace, helping those whose life has met with adversity because of war or unrest, offering not only practical but prayerful support. It supports those who have been or are being persecuted because of their beliefs, or who live in an abusive situation, through its campaigning. It shows mercy to those who find themselves in prison, by visiting and supporting both prisoners and families to find a way forward into the future. It gives support to those who are affected by poverty by supporting food banks, caring for refugees and offering holidays to those who most need them through the AFIA scheme.

All this and so much more, all done in the name of LOVE.

Such a little word but one which speaks volumes, because without it we cannot call ourselves children of God, because God is love, pure and simple. So, I hope you are feeling happy today filled with the Holy Spirit, because the MU is there for all of us, me too, whatever the need, it just takes one simple action on our part, we just need to pick up the phone and speak to an MU friend then we will be either able to give or receive God's love. We don't need to be able to see someone to know if they are happy or sad, we will be able to hear it in their voice. I hope you, like me, are feeling happy today, but if not still try and take that one important step, pick up the phone and receive God's love and comfort from those who love you.

As we entered February we celebrated The Presentation of Christ at the Temple, a time of great celebration, and the end of Epiphany [when I return my Nativity scene and the wise men to the loft] and move forward into Lent the start of the preparation for Easter, the next great event of celebration when love once again shines forth in our lives.

So be as happy as you can because we have much to be thankful for even in the middle of winter.

Love & Prayers, Jenny

Let us Pray:

Father God, we give you thanks that you have brought us together as members of the Mothers' Union. Help us to share your love and be ready to listen to those who feel sad at this time. Be with those countries who are suffering because of national disasters or as a result of war. Bless all who walk beside them and offer help in the best way possible, may they know your love and be given your strength. We ask in the name of Jesus our Saviour. Amen

O Lord our heavenly Father, we bring before you all who work at Mary Sumner House, asking your blessing on all that they do, working tirelessly to ensure that our members are helped to become the best they can be in order to help those around them. We pray especially for Bev, Rob, Adam and Richard, may they know your love and peace in their lives. We pray too for our Worldwide President Sheran and the members of the Worldwide Board of Trustees, Mary, Marie, Thembsie, Roshini, Kathleen, Pamala, Catherine, Julia, Iris, Paul and Jenny. Surround them with your love as they too carry out the work you have set before them. In Jesus name. Amen

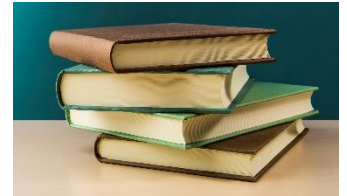
A prayer for Lent, also from Jenny

We thank you, Father, for those days in the desert when, through prayer and fasting, Jesus discovered your will for his life and overcame the temptation of the evil one. Help us, during these days of Lent, to come close to you and to listen to your voice. Give us strength to overcome the temptation to please ourselves and live life without you. Teach us your way. For Jesus' sake. Amen

Books for Prisons



Julia Collinson, our trustee with responsibility for Prison contact, has received a message from Swinfen Young Offenders Institute, appealing for children's books to be used at the visitors' centre.



The new Family Engagement Manager

employed by PACT has started a small library of books which the children have access to during visiting times and which they can take home with them if they so wish. PACT stands for Prison Advice and Care Trust and it is a charitable organisation which supports prisoners and their families in making a fresh start so it is very much part of the Mothers' Union ethos.

We have been working hard to establish a good relationship with this prison and it would be great if we can help in this way. High quality books for all ages of children from baby books to teenagers, sports books, football books, adventure stories would all be welcome. The full gambit really!

If you or family members can supply any books, Julia would be very grateful if you would contact Helen Palfrey or Deb Tudor to arrange collection. Books can be given to Helen, Deb, Liz Binsley at Yoxall and St Giles Mothers Union Shrewsbury. Those who live near enough can also deliver books to the office at Doxey opening times only, but please telephone first to make sure the office is open.

Julia is not available for a few weeks but please contact the office if you would like more information.

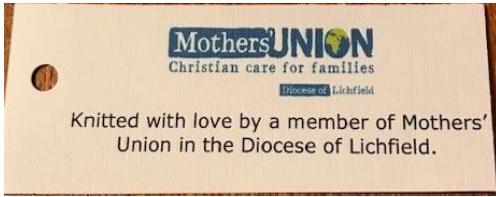
News from Coven Group

Members at Coven have been busy. Since the new year members have been preparing goods for two upcoming events. Money raised will be used to buy items for the Haven in Wolverhampton and other projects supported by the group.



Wool for Wellness

I am delighted that the 'woolly hats for farmers' is still very much a work in progress! Over the last couple of months a number of hats have been sent to me or the office - so many in fact that I have run out of the helpline labels and await receipt of more! The photos show the labels- the helpline one is sewn in, and the Mothers' Union one is attached by a length of wool which is easily removed without damage to the hat.



Sadly, I have lost count of the number of hats so far, but it must be close to 200!!! Your contribution is much appreciated! It is to be confirmed but we hope that the speaker at our AGM in July will be someone from FCN (Farming Community Network) so we shall learn more of the work done by the organisation.

County Show



Preparations have begun for the County Show to be held at the Showground Stafford on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th May. Attractions will include the JCB Dancing Diggers as well as all the usual animal classes, exhibitions, food hall etc. Mothers' Union will again be serving refreshments in the Churches Tent from 9.00am to 5.00/6.00pm, and your assistance is requested! I shall be drawing up a rota for the 2 days so please let me know if you can help. The 'slot' on the rota will be for no more than 2½ hours (less if enough people come forward!) and you will have time to look round the Show before and/or after your duty, making good use of your free entrance ticket. Please let me know, via the office or direct on hapalfrey@sky.com if you would like to be part of the team. An indication of your preference of which day and time would be helpful.



Diocese of Matlosane



Many of you will remember that in 2019 Liz Binsley and I were part of the group led by Bishop Michael on his first visit to the diocesan link of Matlosane in South Africa. The visit was a wonderful experience and Liz and I spent many afternoons and evenings telling branches and groups about the visit and our contact with Mothers' Union there. I hope some of you remember that! On 3rd March a small group led by Bishop Sarah is

leaving to spend about a week in Matlosane and Rev Mandy Walker of Streetley will be taking some items as gifts from us. They include some baby jackets from my branch, and also more than 20 baby hats. They were brought to the office or to a meeting, but I am afraid I do not know who or where they came from! If you recognise them or have any information, please let me know! Please keep the visit in your prayers.



QUIET DAY

A Quiet Day has been arranged for **Monday 25th March 2024** at Shallowford House.

Leader: Val Cox** of St Mary's Church, Wheaton Aston

Time: 10 for 10.30 am. until 3.30 pm.

Cost: There is no fixed charge but donations, as you are able, are welcome.

Please complete and return the form below by **Friday March 15th 2024** to:

Adrian Palphreyman, Diocesan Administrator
Mothers' Union Office, The Parish Church of St Thomas and St Andrew, Doxey,
Staffordshire, ST16 1EQ

You may also book by email: office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk or telephone 01785 227221

Please make sure you give us any information about special dietary needs

.....

LICHFIELD DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION

I wish to apply for places on the Quiet Day to be held at Shallowford House on **Monday 25th March 2024**

Names of Applicants:

.....

.....

Please note any special dietary needs:.....

.....

Contact Name and Address:

.....

Branch.....Tel No.....

Would you like directions to the venue Yes/No

Mothers' Union Office, The Parish Church of St Thomas and St Andrew, Doxey, Stafford, ST16 1EQ
Tel: 01785 227221 Email: office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk
Diocesan President: Helen Palfrey

** Val is an experienced Quiet Day leader and the day promises to be an excellent start to Holy Week.

Please note the closing date of Friday 15th March

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. Many thanks.

Deb: debtudor@live.co.uk

01543 382390

Office: office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk 01785 227221

Wave of Prayer

We hope that many of you were able to join the Wave of Prayer between the 9th and 11th of February. As we pray for our links we need to remember that they, and all of Mothers' Union across the world, are praying for us. The Zoom meetings were available but sadly, very few members joined.

Diocesan Meetings

Dates for the Diary: Spring Gathering Thursday 9th May (afternoon)
Speaker: Emily Brailsford, MSH Lead for Rise Up!
Diocesan AGM Thursday 4th July (evening)
Speaker: FCN (to be confirmed)
Autumn Gathering Saturday 9th November (daytime)

Diocesan Chaplains

Rev Jassica Castillo-Burley stoswald.minister@gmail.com

Rev Kathryn Trimby Llanyblodwel, Oswestry Deanery
kathpant@aol.com 07944 504330 01691 590025

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

Mothers' Union Diocesan Office

Diocesan Administrator: Adrian Palphreyman

The times when Adrian will be available to take calls are

Normal Opening Times

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

Please call if you intend to visit to ensure Adrian is available.

Tel: 01785 227221 (answer machine available)

email: office@mothersunionlichfield.org.uk

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