

Dear members and friends

As I write the weather seems uncertain about what it should do! We have a day or two of sunny and warm, then back to cool and rain again! The weeds seem to be growing faster than the crops in the garden although I must admit that the rhubarb has gone berserk after being planted out after a few years in pots. It was grown from seed when we had an allotment and we brought it 'home' when we gave that up. I have also been able to harvest enough raspberries to make some jam, although the second flush has been enjoyed by a friendly blackbird who frequents the garden and bullies us for mealworms. For a second year he has brought along a juvenile and this year his 'missus' too, although she has been very wary of us. It is a joy (and hard work too!) to have a garden and we appreciate the blessings that the natural world and our surroundings can give us. I do hope that you are able to enjoy some aspect of God's creation over the next few weeks - perhaps on a beach, or walking in the countryside, a stroll in the park or even just admiring gardens or window boxes as you make your way to the shops or look out of your window.

There has been much happening in Mothers' Union, both in the Diocese and worldwide. I mention elections later in this newsletter. Sheran Harper our worldwide president will be finishing her second term of office in December and will be stepping down. She has done an amazing amount of work, having made up for 'lost' time during the pandemic by travelling extensively, most recently to Africa and the Pacific area including Australia and New Zealand. She will be a hard act to follow.

Preparations are under way for celebrating the 150th anniversary of the start of Mothers' Union in 2026. A service in St Paul's Cathedral is planned although no date has been decided and suggestions for an additional event are invited. I wonder what Mary Sumner would think of us now. I hope she would be proud of her legacy as we continue to support women and families in ever changing and challenging times, both in this country and worldwide. Are we ready to continue in her footsteps?

I hope you have a summer of rest and relaxation, with the chance to meet with friends and family, or just the chance to take a break from the usual routine

My love and prayers to you all



Mary Sumner Day

May I remind you that we celebrate our founder Mary Sumner on **Friday 9th August**. Once again, we have the opportunity to join together in Lichfield Cathedral for a service to give thanks for her legacy and the work done by Mothers' Union in today's world. We are participating in the 12.30 Eucharist which will be followed by fellowship (and a picnic lunch?) on 'The Beach', the Cathedral's summer event, brought back for a second time, with sand and deckchairs - all we need is the sunshine! All members and friends will be welcome. It is hoped that the service will be streamed and members from our friendship link of the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross will be able to join with us, as well as those here who are unable to be in Lichfield. There is much happening in Lichfield over the summer - it is worth a visit!

Diocesan AGM

The rearranged Diocesan AGM was held on Tuesday 16th July at Doxey. There was a good attendance and an excellent buffet was enjoyed before the meeting. After the usual business of an AGM – reports, acceptance of accounts etc – the speaker was Steve Jackson, Staffordshire Coordinator for the Farming Community Network, FCN. He spoke of the support that FCN gives to those working in agricultural settings. The hats we knit and pass on to FCN are much appreciated and Steve spoke of some calls to the helpline which have been triggered by having the helpline close at hand. Steve is willing to come to speak to branches or groups and he can be contacted through the office.

Diocesan Elections

As you know we recently embarked on the elections process for Diocesan President and members of the trustee board to serve from January 2025 through the end of 2027. As the number of nominations did not exceed the number of posts available no voting was required. At the Diocesan AGM held at Doxey on Tuesday 16th July the following results were announced to those attending.

Diocesan President	Debra Tudor	
Trustees	Kate Austin	Adie Harris
	Jo Knight	Sue Norris
	Megan Pittwood	

Some of the names will be familiar to you, some may not but I hope to have more information for you in the next newsletter.

Please pray for all of our trustees elect as they prepare for their new role in Mothers' Union in this diocese.

Worldwide elections are also in progress and our new Worldwide President, Provincial President and Zonal Trustee will be announced in due course.

Provincial Gathering

It turned out that, after all, there were a few members from this Diocese at the Canterbury Provincial Gathering in Oxford on June 22nd. Among them were Kate Austin and Rosemary Walker from Telford. Using Kate's notes Rosemary has compiled a comprehensive report of the day and its proceedings. This is being sent separately alongside this newsletter. By all accounts it was a good day with information sharing, worship and fellowship. Thank you to them and others who represented Lichfield Diocese at this event.

Quiet Day

A Quiet Day at Shallowford House is planned for Monday 30th September. A booking form is included with this newsletter. Bookings may also be made by email but please make sure you

include any dietary needs at the time of booking. The day is being led by Rev Zoe Braven-Giles who is curate at St Giles Shrewsbury. As previously there is no fixed charge, but please donate as generously as you can towards the cost of that day.



Christmas Cards for Prisons

It seems strange to be talking about Christmas Cards in the height of summer but to get the cards to the prisons by the beginning of December the cards have to be at Doxey by the end of September.

Adrian says that only a small number of cards have been received at Doxey to date. Last year we completely depleted our stocks of cards and therefore I am asking for branches to be generous and double the number of cards they sent last year.

If you are unable to deliver cards to Doxey, they can be brought to the Quiet Day at Shallowford on Monday 30th September. Failing that cards can be delivered to Julia, Katherine, Helen or Deb.

A gentle reminder that cards should not feature children and the wording inside the card must read "*With love and prayers from Mothers' Union*".

Thank you for your generosity in providing the cards - they may be the only card that some prisoners receive.

Thank you too for the books received for the prison visitor centre. There are enough in stock now but we shall let you know if/when more are needed.

The trustees can be contacted via the office if you have any queries.

Autumn Gathering

Advance notice that the last diocesan meeting of this year, indeed of this triennium, will be held on **Saturday 2nd November**, in the morning into the early afternoon. It is planned that there will be a Bring & Share lunch but more details will be shared nearer the time. We shall welcome the Bishop of Stafford, the Rt Revd Matthew Parker as our speaker.

Summer Events



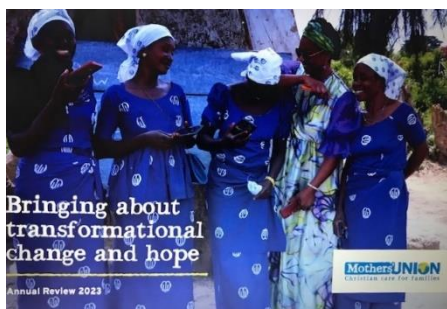
Members of Penkrigde Deanery enjoyed a Strawberry Tea following 'Songs of Praise' hosted by Brewood branch.

Many of you will be having events during the summer. Berkswich recently celebrated 135 years of the branch. Bishop Matthew joined in the celebrations.



Enjoy your events and send us some photos to share!

Annual Review



The 2023 Annual Review of work done by Mothers' Union Worldwide is now available on the central website: mothersunion.org. It is not very print friendly as it has a lot of colour in it, but is still worth a look to be able to appreciate how many lives have been impacted during the year. 569,000 were directly supported through MU programmes and work, with a total of 2.8 million lives supported through the 'ripple effect'.

MUenterprises

Ann Hodkinson, our diocesan MUE representative, is recovering well from her fall and is getting out and about once more, including at the diocesan AGM. If you would like to place an order or arrange for Ann to bring goods to a future event, please contact her using the details below. The new catalogue is expected soon and many new Christmas items are already on the shop section of the central website. You can order direct from the central Mothers' Union website but will be charged more for postage. If you do order direct don't forget to fill in 'Lichfield' in the optional 'Name of Diocese' box!

Telephone: 01785 712357 or email: riverpenk9@gmail.com

Making a Difference

There are no more planned 'Making a Difference' dates arranged but if you would like to offer a venue for a meeting led by the trustees it may be possible to arrange a visit. The sessions are flexible and last about 1½ to 2 hours. The trustees will lead discussions and encourage thoughts about the way ahead. All members are welcome to come to any of the meetings, particularly those within easy travelling distance.

Please contact the Office if you would like more information about what is involved.

Diocesan Chaplain

As I reported in the last newsletter, Rev Jassica is our only Diocesan Chaplain now. As a busy parish priest Rev Jassica has a limited amount of time to fulfil the role of chaplain and the trustees are seeking someone willing to help out in the short term, until the end of this triennium in December, but also who might be interested in joining Rev Jassica as she continues in the role for a second term. Please get in touch with the office if you have any thoughts on this matter and, just as important, please keep Rev Jassica in your prayers.

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

Please remember that the Chaplain is there for every member, in every part of the Diocese.

Summer of Hope 2024

Many of you will have received the mailing from Mary Sumner House about this appeal. If you can raise some money with an event, however small, please send the money direct to MSH, but do let our diocesan office know and send us a picture!

Celebrate and give families hope for a brighter future this summer. This year our annual Summer of Hope appeal is seeking to support brighter futures for families and communities around the world. From individual donations to bake sales, jumble sales and sponsored physical challenges, this summer let us come together to give the gift of hope for a brighter future.

Literacy and numeracy are vital life-skills for all of us. Our appeal pack has a focus on our work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where the amazing support of members is already empowering women to release themselves from the cycle of poverty. Now we urgently need to reach more women, families, and communities, and share these crucial skills more widely so they have the skills and knowledge to transform their own lives.

Copies of the appeal pack and how to get involved can be found at www.mothersunion.org/summer-hope-2024

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

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>