



Keeping in Touch - Newsletter 3 March 2021

Dear fellow members,

Leading MU in the Diocese of Leeds

As we move through the season of Lent we look forward with hope to the joy of Easter and this year to the eventual easing of the lockdown. I am participating in one of the Leeds Diocese Rhythm of Life courses which helps us to look at aspects of our own Christian journey. In 2016 when I set out on my journey as Diocesan President of a newly formed Diocesan MU, I didn't know what lay ahead. Surrounded by a hard working, supportive team of trustees and others assisted by our Secretary, Jo, and Treasurer, Paul, I have been truly blessed. Together, we have overcome many challenges and experienced times of enjoyment and thankfulness.

We come now to another time of change when many of our Trustee Board have served 6 years and must step down according to our Constitution to make way for new people with fresh ideas but who have that same love and enthusiasm for Mothers' Union and want our work to continue. I have used the following words many times and found them to be true!

*"God doesn't call the equipped
He equips those He calls"*

God will lead us and equip us to do his work through Mothers' Union. Listen to Him as we follow in the steps of Mary Sumner who prayed that we all touch as many lives as possible for God. This is our mission. June Houghton, our Provincial President, told us that through other people God showed her that she had the skills to take on roles in MU and that Jesus is always walking by her side and she trusted in Him. Encourage and support one another in identifying the skills and qualities you each have to offer.



As I write this on 22nd March, we have no nominations for the role of Diocesan President. Any member can nominate someone with their permission. Who do you know who might be President? All the roles on the Trustee Board must be filled for the next triennium.

May this Easter bring blessings from the Lord to you and your loved ones.
With love and prayers
Jean



The Make a Mother's Day Campaign

A sensational £71,302 has been raised so far!

Grateful thanks to all who bought an ethical gift or made a donation.

An Easter Message from our Diocesan Chaplain



How are you getting on? The past twelve months have been hard. There has been an absolute tsunami of deaths. We've all had to come to terms with our mortality in a way many have never experienced before. There is so much anxiety and fear, not least about jobs. There has been the deep sadness of not being able to see our families. We have missed being able to give each other a love! As always, there are those who have had to carry disproportionately the heaviest load. We thank God for the NHS!

In a world where so much has been turned upside down and inside out, the message of Easter is that most profoundly political of all events. The Resurrection isn't just something that happened (however we would describe it) in the past

but a radical life to be lived now.

The Mothers' Union, part of the Body of Christ, is an important page in the great story of living the resurrection life. Whether it is helping at the local food bank, being a presence at New Hall Prison, helping with AFIA holidays, being a good neighbour and a friendly voice on the 'phone or staying at home and saying our prayers.

The story of the resurrection is that of the triumph of God at work in the world around us. It is the good announcement of His love and the message of hope that God doesn't give up on us.

Ven. Peter Townley, Archdeacon of Pontefract



A Prayer of Hope at Easter

*Risen Lord,
we marvel at your resurrection power
which gives us sure and steadfast hope as an anchor for our lives
and a beacon to guide our paths.*

*Risen Lord,
enable us to reflect your hope
to those we seek to serve;
that they may turn to you
and find a place of safety.
Amen*



Every member, supporter and donation is valued and welcome



Our secretary, Jo, was delighted to receive a donation recently and sent me this message:
“I have received an anonymous donation today in the form of a £15.00 postal order saying “God bless you and the work you undertake for Him”.
How lovely! Thank you to this kind person! *Jean Thurman*

GOOD NEWS about our Link Diocese Kibungo in Rwanda

From Christian Hope, a charity working in Rwanda, we hear that the bishop in Kibungo has been authorised to purchase 130 goats. This means a change in lives for 130 families in 2 more of his parishes. Please continue to hold Kibungo and all our link dioceses in prayer.



Hilary Fielding, Prayer Team Leader

Birthday News from Garforth Branch

Congratulations to Betty Cawthorne of Garforth Branch in Leeds Episcopal Area who celebrated her 90th birthday on 16th February. Although her daughters live too far away to visit, her grand-daughter and great grand-daughter were able to call round. She had a lovely busy day with doorstep visitors, phone calls, cards and gifts. Her cleaner made a beautiful cake too!

Margaret Bentley, Branch Leader



NEW MEMBERS AT ST MARY'S GOMERSAL despite COVID-19!!

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you 5(!) new members of the Mothers' Union. They were going to be enrolled on Mothering Sunday 2020 but coronavirus intervened! They haven't had a chance to experience much of MU due to lockdown, but I did include them in all the MU emails and prayer requests. Praise the Lord they all said 'Yes' in 2021 and have now received their membership card and MU badge. How blissful to be able to grow our membership in this most dark time of our lives. I am really elated!
Our new members are: Vicky Angell, her mother Barbara, Angela Morrison, Joan Oddy and Gillian Greaves. A heartfelt welcome to our new members and may God be with you.

From Trees Fewster, Gomersal Branch Leader

Note: Since we received this news item, Barbara has passed away, peacefully at home with her family around her. May she rest in Peace.

Future Dates



- **Lady Day Service, Thursday 25th March at 2pm**
Led by Rt Revd Dr. Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford

This will be streamed via the Bradford Cathedral You Tube link as follows:-

<https://youtu.be/HbBcrAwULpA>

The service will be available to watch for 2 weeks.



- **Virtual Annual Gathering on 25th September** - The Annual Gathering, due to be held in Belfast, will now be a virtual event.
- **Provincial End of Triennial Service on Saturday 6th November at 3pm** Liverpool Cathedral - Bishop Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool will be speaking.
- **The Golden Wedding Service** at Ripon Cathedral has been postponed until later in the year.

OUTREACH NEWS - Supporting Prisoners

HMP Newhall

Following a recent zoom talk about the work of Mothers' Union volunteers at New Hall women's prison, Margaret France was pleased to receive this positive response from a branch member:

'It was fascinating to hear about the work which takes place in New Hall Prison, not just the cooking with the ladies in the Rivendell unit, but also the support of the women in the Mother and Baby unit. It was really heartening to hear about the good relationships with the officers there too. I got the impression that New Hall is a prison that really does a good job with rehabilitation'. From Ali

HMP Wetherby

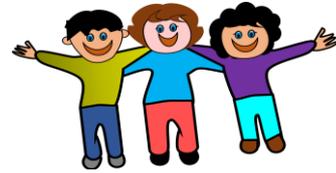
This Easter we hope to bring some joy to the lads in HMP Wetherby Young Offenders Institution by giving them some chocolate and a specially created bookmark, one side with text inserted - "We celebrate today because Jesus gave each of us a future with Him, we just have to accept it. Happy Easter from members of Mothers' Union" and on the other side a cross maze for an activity.
Carolyn Peulevé, Prison Contact



Outreach Returns Forms - Thank You from Yvonne and Sheran!

A huge thank you to all the branches (44) who sent in their Outreach Return Form for 2020. The totals are below and are truly amazing, especially considering the overwhelming restrictions of 2020! I hope you can all continue to keep up this good work and that you keep a record of your branch donations so they will be added to next year's report. I am not the only one saying thank you. Jean sent the results to our World Wide President Sheran Harper and her response is also below. Again from me - thank you all, together we have made a difference.

Yvonne Hutson, General Trustee overseeing Outreach



Dear Jean,

It is lovely to hear from you and please accept warm and loving greetings all the way from sunny Guyana.

Congratulations on a job well done MU Diocese of Leeds!

Thank you for sharing this absolutely amazing outreach work despite the pandemic in 2020. This expression of love-in-action gives me the confidence that an exciting future is ahead for MU! Thank you for always being there when we need you.



Thank God for your members' commitment and the wide range of activities undertaken that made a difference in the lives of so many individuals and families in 2020, despite the challenges. They are all valued and appreciated! Please can I ask you to express my heartfelt thanks to all your members for the tremendous effort they made to touch countless lives; their faithfulness and generosity despite the challenges; and their hearts full of love that reach out and address what matters most in life.

*The commitment of MU Diocese of Leeds to making a difference is awesome!
Truly God's hands and feet here on earth!*

May God continue to bless the work of your hands! May God bless each and every member so they can continue to be a blessing to others!

"We will follow the plan of the work He has given us to do." 2 Cor. 10:13.

Keep safe!

With my love and prayers,
Sheran

OUTREACH DONATIONS
TOTALS FOR DIOCESE OF LEEDS MOTHERS' UNION 2020
COVID DIDN'T STOP MOTHERS' UNION DOING
WONDERFUL WORK!

Caring, Sharing and Showing God's Love. Thank You!

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Teenage Mum's
 Gifts 15, toiletries bags 150, clothing bags 6
Family Refuge donations
 Blankets & Bedding 146, Towels 16
 Welcome toiletry packs 191 Bags of clothing - 42
 Bags of Food 46, plus a whole shop fridge full worth £300
Hospital & Care Home donations
 Emergency Toiletry Packs 786
 Baby blankets and sheets 369
 Premature & baby Cardigans 126, Angel pockets 15
 Premature & baby hats 290
 Christmas gifts 85, Christmas baubles 395
 Twiddle Muffs 153, Adult Blankets 43
 Pairs of Hearts 889, Livers & Kidney sets 125
 Scrubs 39, Scrubs bags 317
 Masks 279, Ear protectors for masks 485
 Prayer squares 562, Prayer shawls 13

CHURCH SUPPORT

Easter and Mothering Sunday flowers & gifts - 375
Baptism gifts and cards 287
Prayer books 10, Hand Puppets 8
Nativity sets 12



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Food banks: Bags of food - 265
Baby Banks:
 Baby toiletries 50, Clothing bags 57
 Equipment 30 items, Blankets 41
Overseas donations:
 Shoeboxes 20, Teddies 92
Prison Support:
 Cookery sessions & food 4 (then suspended due to Covid)
 Bags of clothing 4, Christmas chocolates 10 tins
 2500 signed Christmas cards and 2500 blank cards
 Lots of craft items

Financial support for MU Projects

Over £7000 for our diocesan Away From It All holiday scheme
£13000 Sent to Mary Sumner House for projects at home and overseas and the special appeal.
£100 to Prison Fellowship Angel Tree
£250 (from sale of masks) bought games and activities for the youth project at Seacroft.

Every single item on this list is a life touched by Mothers' Union showing God's love for all.

