

## Keeping in Touch - MU News (1) COVID-19 situation and Diocese of Leeds activities during 2019

It has been decided not to print an Annual Review of 2019. The AGM will hopefully take place at the November Council meeting and the Annual Accounts and Report will be available then. In the meantime, as most members are staying at home, here is some of the news from 2019 to keep you in touch. I will send more in future weeks. Mothers' Union, Diocese of Leeds has experienced some challenges due to the COVID -19 situation. As you may have been wondering what is happening, I will outline a few of the issues:



- The MU Prayer Network has never been more important as we have had prayer requests for people suffering from the virus and for families bereaved at this time when those able to attend funerals is restricted. Our clergy also need prayer as they minister to families in distress.
- The AFIA scheme - The Haven Caravan Park at Filey closed before the first bookings for the year were due to begin. We are in touch with Haven and will know when our holidays can resume. Denise Barrett is in contact with families due to go this year.
- New Hall Prison projects - All volunteer work at the Prison has stopped and Yvonne Hutson is in contact with the volunteers. Please hold the staff and the residents and their families in your prayers.
- The Emergency Appeal for finance - besides individual support for the Appeal, please consider if your branch is holding an excess in its account, a sum could be sent to support the Central Mothers' Union.

Ideas for staying active or connected during the pandemic:

1. Some members in the Ripon Area are keeping busy after they discovered the need for "Scrub Bags" at Harrogate Hospital. These are used for staff to deposit their scrubs before sending them to be laundered so that they don't contaminate anything on the way. Leeds members have also made some and sent them to Leeds Hospitals and care homes. They can be made from old sheets or pillowcases.
2. Others are knitting headbands with a button on each side to attach masks to and pairs of hearts- one for the patient and one given to their family to help them feel connected when they can't visit- lovely!
3. One branch has asked members to have a prayer time, coffee and cake at the time of their meeting and put their meeting subs into a container ready for when they meet again.
4. Members are joining midday prayers at home either with Mary Sumner House on Facebook, or using Families Worldwide and their own prayers.

Stepping aside from public worship helps us to value how much being together in prayer and receiving the sacrament means to each of us. As MU members we have prayer resources to help us so let us "Be still in the presence of the Lord" and rest in Him at this time.

I hope you enjoy reading this news which demonstrates just how much is done through faith and action by MU members - we all want this to continue. I look forward to the time when we can meet up again.

Love & prayers from Jean (Diocesan President)

A daily prayer for use at this time  
from Hilary Fielding, MU Prayer Team Leader

*Lord help us to live this day quietly, easily;  
To lean upon your great strength trustfully, restfully;  
To wait for the unfolding of your will patiently, serenely;  
To meet others peacefully, joyously;  
To face tomorrow confidently, courageously.  
Amen*

## Time of Reflection at Parcevall Hall 2019



“I look to the hills from whence cometh my help” came to mind as I looked out from my bedroom window at Parcevall Hall. I was unsure what to expect, my first time there, but Parcevall Hall is a beautiful building and the gardens (which are open to the public) are superb. Branch Leader Jenni Wohlman and I were able to have lots of conversation on the journey which we don't normally have time for! My room was basic but for me, the view from my bedroom was compensation enough. I never tired of looking at it.

There were twenty of us. Revd Bryony Partridge, Bradford Diocesan Chaplain, led the two days and it was made very clear that attendance at the sessions was voluntary, you could attend, all, some or none. This time away was for us to use as we wanted. It was good to meet new people and forge links but it was also good to see familiar faces from Area meetings and have the time to have a proper chat and get to know them better. The food was really good. One member celebrated her birthday with a cake made by the kitchen staff and a card signed by us all.



The sessions, run by Bryony with help from Hilary Pollard, were interesting. We were shown pictures of Biblical scenes and asked to imagine ourselves there as the different participants. How did it make us feel? What did we think was happening? We were given plenty of time to reflect on what we had done in the sessions and free time to enjoy the gardens. There were times of worship and one morning we all gathered in the chapel for Holy Communion. We gave each other the bread and wine which was very moving. I hope that the timing is right for me to go again next year. It was an experience that will stay with me.

Barbara Neale, Thurstonland Branch, Huddersfield.

## MU Diocese of Leeds working in Partnership



**Neil Obbard** - Neil and his wife, Tina, spoke at our MU Council meeting in 2018. A former British Army sniper, Neil who came to faith during an MU AFIA holiday has taken on a new role in Seacroft as Lead Evangelist enabling young people 11-18 to discover faith in Jesus Christ. He is working with a local volunteer team across the Seacroft Estate, parts of which are judged to be within England's 10 per cent most deprived locations. We are planning to support Neil's work through prayer support and providing some practical items for his work with the young people.

**Eckersley House** - Situated close to the Leeds General Infirmary, Eckersley House provides support for families of sick children by giving them somewhere to stay close by. Some members (Whitkirk Branch, pictured here) are helping by giving supplies of cleaning materials and tea, coffee and biscuits - a vital part of the house's hospitality for the families.



**Mothershare** - in Halifax, is a voluntary group operating on a referral basis to supply vulnerable women and families with the essentials to care for their babies. They provide assistance to families in difficult circumstances by supplying baby equipment and clothing for children of all ages when it is needed. (Yvonne Hutson, pictured delivering goods).

**Leeds Baby Bank** - supports families in the Leeds area who are in need of baby essentials. They also source baby equipment and clothes. Donations of nappies, wipes, baby formula, baby food and baby equipment are always welcome.



**Charlie's Angels** - support bereaved parents and families who have lost babies or children up to the age of 16, across Yorkshire and beyond. They were founded by a family in 2013 following the death of their baby Charlie when they found that there was very little or no support for bereaved families of children. Leeds Episcopal Area members have donated cross stitch bereavement cards to be given to bereaved families from Mothers' Union and also donated knitted toys and baby clothes for subsequent babies born to the families. These are accompanied by a copy of our MU booklet 'Welcome to our World'.