

2020 December and January Newsletter



Ely Cathedral Tree

A sight we are familiar with, taken just after Thursday prayers in December 2019. Things will be different this year both in the cathedral and in our home lives, but much will remain the same.

As we begin our Advent journey we pray for holy guidance to lead us to the place of peace.

As we carry the burdens of the year gone by we pray for a lifting of our spirits.

On every step of our star-led way we pray for new grace for the year ahead.

In seeking the place of the Christ-child may we be ever aware that the risen Lord accompanies us every step of the way. Amen.

- taken from Praying in every Season

WAVE OF PRAYER for Ely Diocese

10th–12th Dec. Please remember to set aside time to pray for our link diocese. Prayer sheets have been distributed. If you wish to join other MU members on Zoom at 3pm on Friday 11th December the ID is 818 0300 1106. By telephone ring 0203 901 7895, when prompted enter 818 0300 1106# Others across the world will be praying for us too.



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 20201

Please pay subscriptions of £20 to your Branch or to Diocese (for Diocesan members) by Jan. 31st.

Zoom ID for the Global Service at 10am on 5th December is 835 8609 0248 (last digit is not 3)

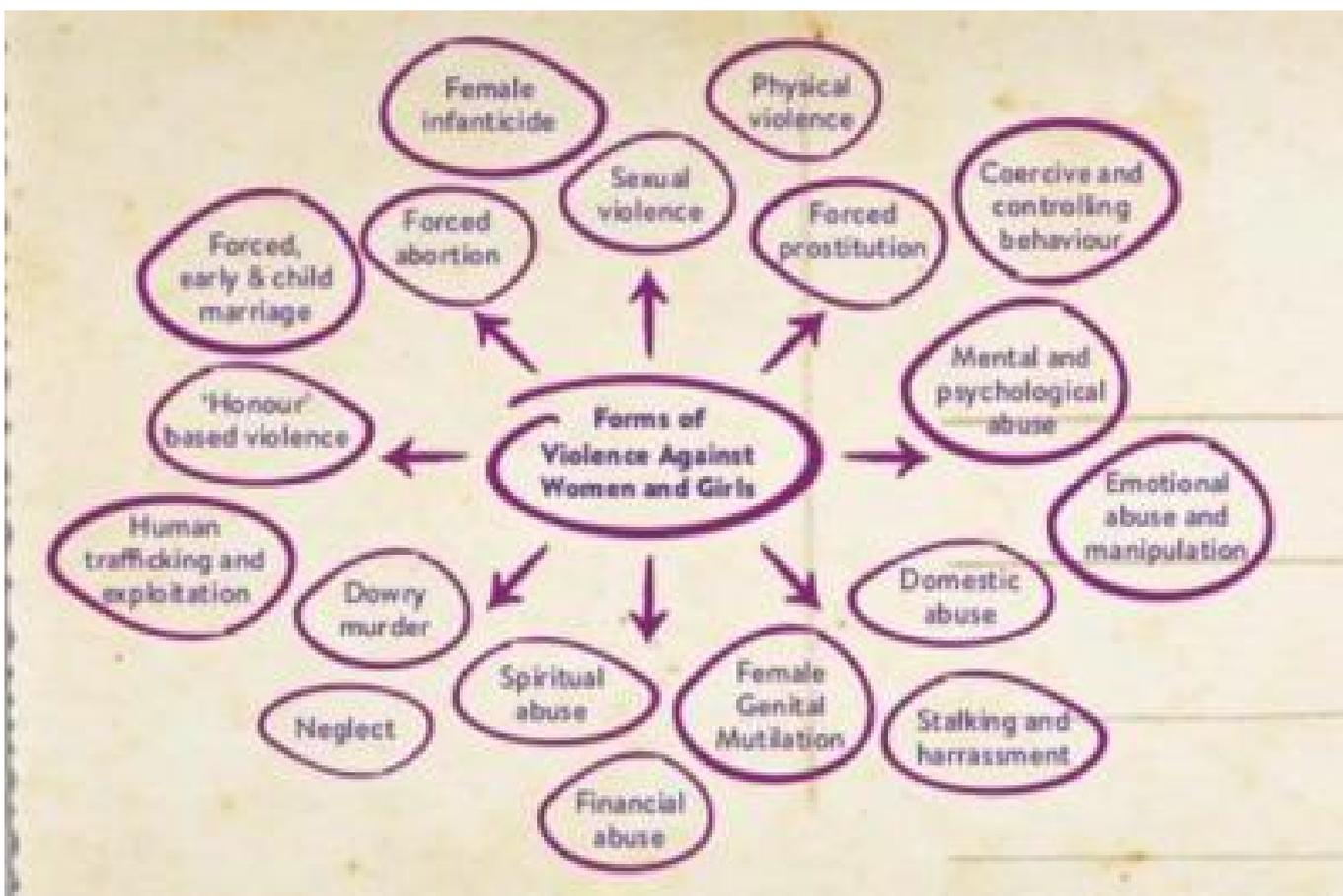


Like many other branches **Farcet** have been unable to meet for most of this year. They have kept themselves busy with knitting for a number of charities. The photograph shows Veronica with 6 knitted blankets, 2 knee blankets, a baby cot blanket and baby bonnets, only a small selection of the items given to Hope House for the homeless and the Tudors residential home.

They are looking forward to meeting after Easter and getting back to some sort of normality.

Thanks go too, to all the other members throughout the diocese who have been busy sewing and knitting this year to help those in need.

During the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence many members across the world will have been thinking and praying for girls and women who are suffering. It is not the same everywhere and below is a chart to remind us of all aspects.



Global Day 2020 Service.

This year the MU is celebrating the 16 days of Activism with a variety of events. As a diocese we plan to join together for a service on Zoom (ID 835 8609 0248) on Sat 5th December at 10am. We hope as many members as possible will be able to join together to worship as we pray for peace, especially in homes around the world.

REFLECTION FOR DECEMBER

Philip Baker (26th November 2020)

Inspiration for provoking thought is not limited to the bible. In these far from normal times I have not limited my reading plan to that great book (although that would normally be enough on its own) but I am reading or re-reading a number of classics, including Robinson Crusoe (which I am not sure I have ever read beyond children's versions and which I thoroughly recommend).

The following extract is on his recovering from a serious illness some years after his shipwreck and arrival on his island (my apologies for it being so long, but Mr Defoe cannot be accused of brevity in his literary style):

I missed the fit for good and all, though I did not recover my full strength for some weeks after. While I was thus gathering strength, my thoughts ran exceedingly upon this scripture, "I will deliver thee;" and the impossibility of my deliverance lay much upon my mind, in bar of my ever expecting it: but as I was discouraging myself with such thoughts, it occurred to my mind, that I pored so much upon my deliverance from the main affliction (ie to be rescued from the island), that I disregarded the deliverance I had received; and I was, as it were, made to ask myself such questions as these; viz. Have I not been delivered, and wonderfully too, from sickness? from the most distressed condition that could be, I had not owned and been thankful for that as a deliverance, and how could I expect greater deliverance? This touched my heart very much and immediately I kneeled down, and gave God thanks aloud, for my recovery from my sickness.

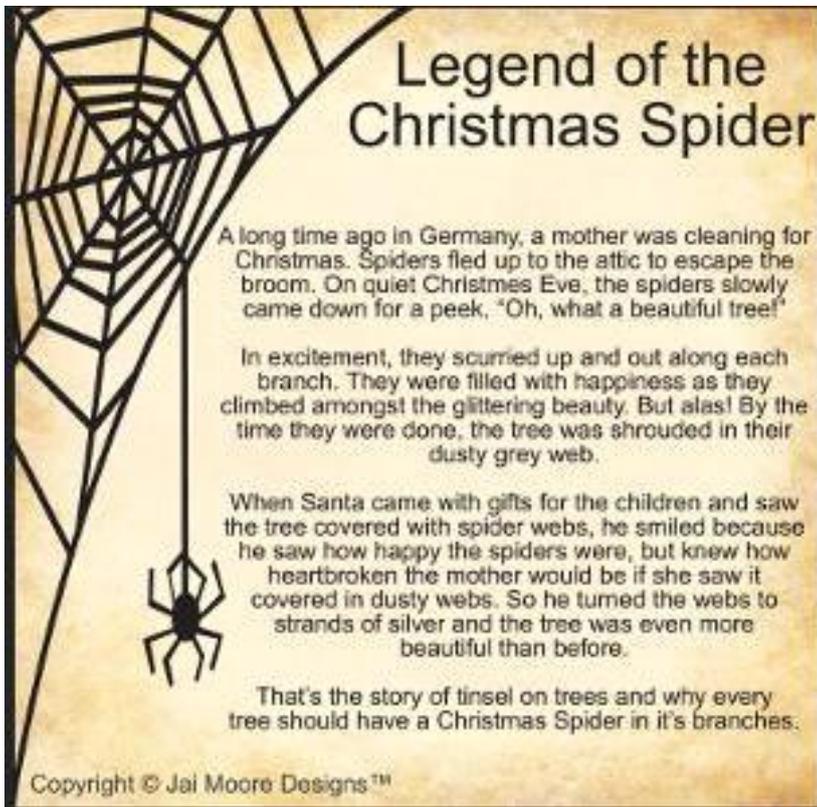
How often do we make the mistake of failing to be grateful for what we do have rather than being angry or disappointed at not receiving what we wish for? God always answers our prayers, but not always as we expect, so we need to be on the lookout.

In my own situation I have found an extension of this principle to be very helpful: to be grateful and happy for the good times we had rather than to be angry and sad for the good times we might have had in the future. In fact, so much so that people are sometimes surprised at how positively I can express my thanks for the nearly 60 years of happiness Susan and I shared rather than regret at the sadness of it not still being the same.



Susan's funeral was, as you would expect, very difficult for her family and we were all buoyed up by the huge amount of support given by you all, thank you. In addition to the limited number of those of us in church over 70 groups and individuals joined with us via Zoom which was amazing. All areas of Susan's life were represented, her relatives, church family, friends and neighbours, Mothers' Union contacts from everywhere and those we shared time with on the river. Over 200 people and groups have sent a card or letter, most mentioning some memorable occasion shared with Susan! All this shows how she connected with others and made an impact on lives. I am also now able to report that over £2000 has been donated in her memory to the Mothers' Union and it is my sincere hope that this will enable the impact she made to continue to be effective in some way. It is a truly magnificent sum and the family's appreciation goes to all who contributed to make it so.

Philip Baker



Thoughts on ADVENT

Helen Banyard

I love lights. Whether it's the warm rays of the sun, the bright flames of a bonfire or the twinkling lights on a Christmas tree. Light lifts my spirits and I feel happier. We are in Advent, the season before Christmas as we wait for the coming of the Christmas child. Do you have an Advent calendar and/or an Advent candle? As a small child I loved the anticipation of opening a numbered window or door throughout December till Christmas Eve. It was exciting to see what was behind the number for that day and let the light shine through the picture which was revealed, perhaps a cracker, a toy drum or a star. Then there was the flare of the flame as the match lit the wick of the Advent candle and watching the wax slowly melt away the small section for each day. (I still treat myself to this annual ritual - an important part of preparing for Christmas and the calendars and candles are sent to wherever my children/ grandchildren are - Shanghai and New York State this year).

This year we are surrounded by darkness- the pandemic looms large, alongside the ever-present wars, hunger, poverty, loss of employment, the effects of climate change, and the results of domestic and sexual abuse. It is important that we look forward to the Light before it comes. The calendar or candle can provide us with our own small light in this world which can feel hostile and forbidding. The light invites us to look beyond the darkness and to trust in our gift for God, in the new-born child, who lights up our heart, no matter how desperate we may feel. Be guided by the unexpected lights and those that refuse to be extinguished because God is always with us. The seasons of Advent and Christmas which fall in our midwinter give us the opportunity to become the bearers of a light, kindled by the Spirit, to give hope in a world of darkness.

December is a month of expectation, anticipation and hope. Christmas is God's gift to us of His son, who is visible and tangible to everyone who is looking and seeking. Let us share the mystery - to look beyond our lighted windowpane candles as part of our own Advent journey. We are invited to knock on the door and enter into the divine mystery as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" John 1 v5

Zoom meetings information

**5th Dec. Global Day Service. 10am
ID 835 8609 0248**

**11th Dec. Wave of Prayer 3pm
ID 818 0300 1106**

**17th Dec. Thursday Prayer led by
Angela Jones 10.30am on Worship
and working with Mothers and
Toddlers**

ID 857 9631 9028

**21st Jan. Thursday Prayer led by
Hazel Williams 10.30am on New
Start**

ID 852 1960 4460

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