



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2021



Preparing for Easter

Helen Banyard

We are in the church's season of Lent during which we are encouraged to give more of our time and ourselves to prayer, fasting and study. A time to review our faith journey as we travel towards the gift of Easter.

Traditionally we were encouraged, and the emphasis was placed, on fasting and penitence. As a child I well remember the sound of my pocket money falling through the slot in my Lent collecting box for Overseas Mission, every week during Lent. Today we are given a far wider choice as our way of life has changed and giving up something with meaning now may include a time without social media as an alternative to biscuits or chocolate. We have also been offered this season as an opportunity to increase our giving in time or money to those who are in need, and this year, that may include an extra phone call to someone living alone. Group Bible study and prayer are often well supported during Lent and lockdown may not make this possible for many but this time may be used as a special time of private prayer to strengthen our relationship with God. There is no one way suits all - what is difficult for one of us may be very easy for another - so we each need to look around and find the Lent discipline which best tests/suits us. In a year of changes do look at the MU Family Lent Calendar for 2021 which provides a wide variety of ideas.

Spending so much time in the house I have turned to a book which helps to find God in everyday items and which may transform our approach to each new day. *At Home in Lent* (an exploration of Lent through 46 objects) by Gordon Giles, published by BRF, was inspired by Neil MacGregor's 2010 BBC Radio 4 Series *The History of the World in 100 objects*. It reinforces that the way we live is spiritual as well as practical and we are invited to discover through daily readings that God is already in our homes. Whether you are a minimalist or a collector of 'stuff' are you ready to open your heart and mind as well as your door to let God in?

For many of us our home is not complete without a garden, patio pot or window box. The fruits from outside enter our homes in vases, the pantry or the fridge/freezer. As the weather continues to improve and we are able to spend more time outside we are able to thank God for the signs of new life around us - a foretaste of the new life and joy in the promise of Christ's resurrection.

*Dear Lord, Let us take the opportunity of Lent to enjoy the fulfilling labour of working alongside the master gardener to clear our lives ready for fruitfulness. Let us surrender to God the barren ground of good intentions and unfulfilled aims. Let us be ready for Him to prune us so that more fruit can be produced. May we revel in His closeness as He tends our hearts and plants the seeds of new growth in our lives. Amen
(Praying in every Season - MU prayer book)*

Faith In Action - March 2021

With the good news of the hopeful Lockdown easing, Di Sabel, our AFIA Officer will be aiming to book holiday breaks for some stressed families very soon, some who have been waiting for almost a year. We hope this will give them something positive to look forward to.

In March, the Fenland Family Bank has secured premises, and will be welcoming customers when they can. We have contributed items towards their setting up. If anyone has any surplus baby/toddler equipment, (they support up to school age) please ring 0798 572 7025 if you have anything to donate. If you are a knitter, and have baby/children's knitting ready, or would like to knit some, Audrey Kirk is collecting, and can tell you what is most needed. (0135 740782 or audreykirk@gmail.com)

Ely Baby Bank are still in need of knitted cardigans/jackets for 9 -12 month babies.

Unfortunately, our outlet for warm clothing for the homeless has closed in Wisbech. If anyone knows of any groups/organisations/outlets supporting the homeless, that would welcome items, please let me know.

The requested lap blankets for the Frailty Unit at Hinchinbrooke are beginning to arrive. Thank you to the skilled knitters, and those who crochet and weave.

Jean Webb



REPORT ON THE WOMEN'S REFUGE FEBRUARY 2021

This past year has been a particularly difficult and busy one at the Mid-Cambridgeshire Women's Refuge, due mainly to the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the lockdowns. Putting measures in place to keep everyone at the Refuge safe from the virus has been a real challenge. There has been an increase in the demand for places as domestic violence has increased across the country, but the Refuge can only accommodate eight women and their children at any given time. As soon as one moves on to their own accommodation their place has been immediately filled. As Tina said a few days ago, "There has been so much coming and going we don't know whether we're coming or going most of the time!" ("We" being Tina herself and her assistant, Carolyn).

During lockdown they had to make the decision not to accept any donations of goods so would-be donors have had to keep the goods on hold or dispose of them to other charities. Between the lockdowns however Tina was able to take several loads of donated goods, and these had to be stored for three days in an outside storeroom before they could be used. In the weeks leading up to Christmas gifts, especially vouchers for Tesco and other supermarkets, toys, chocolates, sweets and cleaning materials came pouring in and as always were gratefully accepted. This year I was able to pass on a larger total value of vouchers than in any previous year, £510! These were all donated by MU branches or churches in Ely Diocese. Our own MU branch members contributed £150 worth. The staff at the Refuge do not distribute all the vouchers to the women residing there over the Christmas period, but throughout the year as new residents arrive in need of financial support until they begin to receive their benefits.

Each new arrival receives a welcome package and another when they leave, and this always includes some cleaning materials as well as toiletries and towels. Donations of these items are therefore always needed in addition to dry and packaged groceries, nappies and sanitary items, children's clothing (good as new) and bedding, which can only be accepted if brand new during the present time. Household goods especially kitchenware is also greatly needed for the women when they leave and move into their own accommodation. Last year someone offered a vacuum cleaner and another a microwave, and these were gratefully accepted. Tina is always willing to collect such items when available.

Liz Elson

MU Rep for the Mid Cambridgeshire Refuge

My Dad!

Frank Henry Burton was born in Ironbridge, Shropshire in December 1925. He grew up in North Devon and Somerset, the family finally settling in Burnham on Sea (where I was born!) and Frank went to school there, later winning a scholarship to go to the boy's Grammar School in Bridgewater. He left at 14, did several jobs, including working in a gentleman's outfitters and joined the RAF in 1944. After the initial training he was then recruited as a wireless operator. After the war finished, he started working for the MoD in Somerset, where he married Dorothy (my Mum!). Nine and a half years later (when I was two and a half), we moved to South East London, Frank worked at the Woolwich Arsenal, at Berkeley Square in the City and Mottingham with a brief spell in BAOR in Rheindahlen, Germany. His last working days were at RAE Farnborough, where he was a senior accountant.

Frank retired in 1985 and they returned to live in Burnham on Sea, Somerset. He was very busy doing voluntary work with the WRVS and Highbridge Festival of the Arts. He and Dorothy returned to St Andrew's

Church where they were "regulars" and Dorothy continued to be a loyal member of Mothers' Union. When Dorothy died in 2015, Frank moved up to Wisbech St Mary to live with us in the Vicarage and we all moved into Wisbech town in 2016. Frank was enrolled as a Mothers' Union member in his 90's, continuing the support that he had always given to Dorothy's membership and my own.



Frank touched the lives of so many during his 95 years, he was a shining example of the Mothers' Union ethos of upholding family life and marriage, his own lasting well over 60 years.

Sarah Bradbury MU Trustee and ADVP.

DIOCESAN LADY DAY SERVICE 25th MARCH

In a normal year there would be MU services across the diocese to celebrate Lady Day. In most places that is not going to happen this year so there will be a Diocesan Lady Day service on Zoom led by Revd. Michael Banyard, starting at 10.30am. To join the meeting click on the link or enter the ID below



Topic: Hazel Williams. Lady Day Service

Time: Mar 25, 2021 10:15 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86515124991>

Meeting ID: 865 1512 4991

Granta Deanery are also holding a Zoom Service with communion at 9.30am led by Revd. Petra Shakshaft. If you wish to join it please e-mail Janetm.martin@ntlworld.com for the link.

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In February there was an article about the **Photo Competition and our new YouTube Channel**, which has links to the video. If it was not possible for you to click on the Newsletter link last time, to take you to the website, this is the link separately, which will hopefully make it easier to access. Press Ctrl and click on the link.

Photo Competition video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMuzeJuxz_c

Debbie has done a wonderful job with all the photographs. Well worth watching.
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I have the sad news that Barbara Goodden of Oakington died in a nursing home on 6th February of Covid aged 83. A former member of Grantchester branch, she had also supported the Action and Outreach team.

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If you do not already **Gift Aid** your subscription (or your other donations) and you are a tax payer please consider it. Your subscription is worth £5 more to the diocese if you do so. A gift aid form is going out with this newsletter and also to you if you receive it by e-mail, or if it is delivered it will be in hard copy.

World Day of Prayer Services on March 5th will not be happening in person, in most places across the world because of Covid. On that day the World day of Prayer International Committee will release a video on their u-tube channel, led by the women of Vanuatu, so that wherever we are we can join the service.

ZOOM MEETINGS

18th March Thursday Prayer. Open at 10.15am for 10.30am start. ID 852 3557 4315 (no password)

25th March Lady Day 10.30am. ID 865 1512 4991.

By Telephone ring 0203 051 2874 then follow the instructions given.

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