

A Letter from the Diocesan President

Dear Fellow-member

As Christmas approaches, we remember Joseph and Mary, with Mary heavily pregnant, making that difficult journey to Bethlehem, without knowing where they were to stay that night. In imagination we can travel with them, and accept that kind, but nonetheless inadequate, place to sleep in a cattle stall - improvising somewhere for the new-born Jesus to be laid. The prospect was uncertain, and later led to flight into Egypt as refugees. Despite the Christmas card scenes, the reality must have mirrored the desperate situations faced by many whom we seek to serve – the homeless and the refugees.



This Christmas time, many of us do not know if, and how, we will be able to be with our families. Some of us may be fearful for our own, or our families' health and wellbeing. Our faith in the baby born in a manger gives us hope and confidence that God knows and understands our sorrows, and is with us to uphold and protect.

Mothers' Union is centred on family life, and seeks to protect those for whom this is most challenging. Among these are the women of the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), for whom life is always a challenge, made worse by the ongoing war, and by COVID-19. It is even harder for those who, because of the lack of education for girls, cannot read or write – for them seeking to make a little money for the family is fraught with difficulty. **From noon 1st – noon 8th December, we can donate to them through the Mothers' Union website (www.mothersunion.org/Christmas), and all our donations will be doubled, through the 'Big Give Christmas Challenge'.** The money will be used to help tackle their challenges.



Our new magazine, 'Connected', will help us to understand the challenges faced by fellow members throughout the world, and their achievements.

Meanwhile our own work with the abused, the homeless, and refugees continues, with the shoe box and gift bag collection, and with extra support for the People's Kitchen, and for the refugees seeking to help abused families. We pray for all of them, that they may know something of the joy of Christmas.

A few Branches have already started to meet together, for instance on Zoom (which can also be accessed by phone). There are ideas and videos on the Mothers' Union website for activities and discussions (under 'Group and Branch resources'). Many of the items relate to the 2021 theme '**Rebuilding Hope and Confidence**'. We are also working towards a list of speakers who can speak to Branches in this way. Please ask, if you would like someone to set up Zoom for your meeting. But, most of all, do keep in touch with each other, so that Mothers' Union membership can be a support to each one of us.

May you know the joy of the Christ child with you and your family this Christmas time.

With love

Barbara

GENEROSITY OF MOTHERS' UNION MEMBERS

Mothers' Union members throughout our Diocese have been keeping in touch and caring for each other in these very difficult times. Many have also been looking outside of their own branches to help those in their community. One example has been the members of Haydon Bridge with Henshaw and Beltingham. For many years the MU members of this branch have supported the local Domestic Abuse Charity in Hexham. This was formerly called 60-80-30 (their telephone number) but is now under the umbrella of Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service.

During the year at Branch meetings there would be a Bring and Buy sale, the proceeds of which were used to buy shopping vouchers for the people who use 60-80-30. The members also gave gifts to the clients at Christmas. This year some gifts were donated but many of the members have not been able to go shopping, however they have given donations which were used to buy gifts. In all 26 gifts were given to the Charity along with shopping vouchers. The branch managed to make up 4 boxes for the homeless, mostly from donations which a couple of the members used to buy items to make up the boxes, as well as a bag full of luxury toiletry items and eight boxes of biscuits.

The members are now looking forward to attending the Hexham Deanery Advent Service which is planned to take place in All Hallows, Henshaw on 9th December with all Covid precautions in place.

Sheila Walker VP

ACTION AND OUTREACH

AFIA breaks

A group of twenty seven adults and thirty children from the Pendower Holiday Group enjoyed a holiday at the Blue Dolphin Park in Filey, Yorkshire, at the end of July. The children were very excited at the thought of going away after such a long time in lockdown. The families had saved up to pay for their own accommodation, but needed help to pay for transport costs.



Because of social distancing, five cars and a coach were needed to transport the group; this was the first holiday MU had supported since the start of lockdown in March. After the holiday the group sent Margaret Crawforth a thank-you card for all her hard work, and



thanked our members for the help which made their holiday possible at such a difficult time.

Altogether thirty families (sixty four adults and a hundred and seven children) have been on holiday this summer.

Supporting the Refuges

For those in refuges the weeks in lockdown were especially difficult. Once we were out of lockdown in the summer it was wonderful to be able to offer AFIA breaks to these families who were “really fed up”. Margaret worked very hard with the refuges, caravan parks and other agencies to help provide holidays for vulnerable families. Several of these holidays were different from last year, as indeed they had to be, but the aim was to salvage something during this summer to help create good lasting memories for as many people as possible. Two ladies were accepted for a supported break at Shepherds’ Dene. One refuge in North Tyneside shared a caravan stay between 14 families; the refuge used two caravans and each family stayed for two nights. Those short breaks improved the wellbeing of those who had had a particularly difficult few months.

The Harbour Refuge has been running a course organised by the INSPIRE Programme. Traditional empowerment programmes for victims of domestic abuse haven’t been significantly updated in the last twenty years, and tend to focus on physical behaviours; but our thinking about and understanding of domestic abuse has altered considerably and issues such as coercive control, online abuse and stalking are major factors within abuse relationships in 2020.

Mothers’ Union paid for the hire of premises for several days so that everyone at Harbour Refuge could attend the course. Obviously there are no photographs.



We also paid for refreshments for the Cedarwood centre on Meadowell, so they could have a Halloween party. It looks as though everyone had a brilliant time.

Edna Maddison has received a very warm letter on behalf of the Director of Nursing at the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Hospital in Cramlington, thanking us for our ‘incredibly generous donations of baby clothes and toiletries’ donated to the maternity and special care baby units. Isn’t it nice to be appreciated!

Modern Slavery

More than 200 years after the abolition of slavery there are still estimated to be over 45 million men, women and children trapped in modern slavery today. ‘Modern Slavery’ is an umbrella term for various forms of slavery, trafficking and exploitation of human beings stripped of their dignity and basic rights. Survivors tell stories of being sold a ‘better life’; often coming from areas with little possibility of work or education, they were falsely offered a job, a chance to make a better life for themselves. While many are trafficked from overseas, a large proportion are trafficked within the UK— over two thirds of homeless charities believe that hostels, night shelters and even some food banks are targeted to lure people into slavery. The Clewer Initiative forms part of the Church of England’s approach to eradicating modern slavery, enabling dioceses and wider Church networks to develop strategies to detect it in their communities and provide victim support and care. Victims can be found in labour exploitation including agriculture, construction, car washes, nail bars, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, benefit fraud, pickpocketing, theft, drug-running and other organised crime.

What can you do?

If you suspect someone is being exploited, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Go on to the Clewer website www.theclewerinitiative.org and find out more

And pray—for the trafficked, for the enslaved, for those working day and night to rescue and support victims.

Linda Benneworth

A New (Internet) Branch for Newcastle Diocese

My goodness, what is the world coming to or more precisely, what is the MU coming to? Let me explain.

In January this year I found myself with a group of people who were genuinely interested in MU or to be more accurate, were interested in what we do, our varied work, our projects. They came from different areas around the city and we had originally planned to meet at an independent venue and work from there.

Along came Covid and a plan to meet in early April was scuppered. However I felt strongly that this enthusiasm for MU must not be lost, especially as about half were younger Mums with children aged between approx. eight and eighteen, just what we need in MU.

In June we began meeting on Zoom, the last Friday of the month (no work next day) at 7.30 pm and, by the time you read this, we will have opened as a branch, again using Zoom to do so. Is this a “first” for MU? It certainly is in this Diocese, but I become more convinced as time goes by that this is a possible and positive way forward.

Our group, including myself, will number twelve, three of whom are already members, two who were Diocesan members because there was no branch for them in their locality and one who felt that the new initiative was more in tune with her vision of MU. That leaves eight ladies who will be enrolled when we open on 27th November. This branch is, and always will be, online and discussion/project based, and we have already identified a project to follow.

As one mum explained to me, an evening meeting still presents difficulties for someone who has had a stressful day at work, comes home knowing there is a meal to prepare, homework to be supervised (that’s stressful too!) then prep. for the next day, bedtime to attend to ----- and so on. Who then can face dressing up, going out? Using Zoom you can put your feet up, laptop, tablet or phone on your lap (even put your jim-jams on, I don’t mind) and enjoy being part of something really worthwhile, and our base line of prayer and worship can still be relevant and an integral part of the meeting.

The new normal, when it comes, will never be the same as pre-Covid. MU is shrinking due to our ageing membership. We need to “tell and sell” MU, tell everyone what we do and whilst we are telling, sell MU. Younger people admire what we do and will respond if we are prepared to meet them half way and acknowledge that we have to work with them using the medium they know and understand. Using the internet, locality becomes irrelevant, it’s new, it’s different but it holds such promise for the future.

We owe it to our older, loyal members to plan a future for the Mothers’ Union they have so faithfully supported for so many years.

Sylvia Hickey VP

Stop press news

We are calling the project that this new on-line branch has decided to pursue “Adopt a Refuge”. We will provide basic requirements to make up a welcome pack to be given to each mother and child arriving at a refuge with almost or absolutely nothing, which, sadly, is the norm. The cost for a mother with two children I estimate to be approx. £65. We applied for a grant to cover the cost and I am delighted to say that we have just heard that we have been successful. The Freemasons have awarded us a significant sum and Mothers’ Union is extremely grateful for their generosity. Domestic Abuse is being called the second pandemic and so this award makes it possible to take this project forward at a time when it is most needed.

A huge “thank you” to the Freemasons; we shall spend every penny with great care, and this will have a very positive impact on families at a most vulnerable time.

Become a “Zoomer”

We are all nervous of taking on new things and meeting on Zoom is alien to us but we are finding ourselves trying to operate in new and difficult conditions due to the pandemic. At present, and I suspect for a good while yet, we cannot meet as usual and on-line contact is the only tool at our disposal.

Contrary to what you might think it is not hard to use. One benefit of Zoom is that we can all see each other and feeling connected is really important. You can of course have a 40 minute free meeting but that is not really long enough for an “as near as normal” branch meeting.

I have a Zoom licence and would really welcome using it for a branch to have a meeting in this way. I “host” it, which only means setting it up, sending out the joining link and admitting participants; what happens then is entirely up to the branch leader, who can provide opening and closing prayers and use me as a speaker if she so wishes or run the meeting as she chooses. I know not everyone can access the internet but you can also use any telephone, landline or mobile, to take a full part, though without being seen of course. The phone connection works really well, which means that no one is excluded. Some branches have a large proportion of members who can use a PC/tablet etc. and for others there is the phone choice.

Please do seriously consider meeting in this way as, sadly, I fear that even with a vaccine in the offing it will be a long time before we can return to what we know and love.

If anyone would like to know more, wants help or advice, contact me and we can talk you through the process on the phone.

Be brave, take the plunge: you won’t regret it and hopefully before too long we will have a list of diocesan speakers who can join me.

Sylvia Hickey VP

Domestic Abuse Update

Mary Sumner House asked each Diocesan President to write to their Bishop urging them to support the new Domestic Abuse Bill presently making its way slowly through the parliamentary system, noting the additional considerations agreed by MU working with the Anglican Communion. Our President Barbara followed this request and wrote to Bishop Christine, a member of the House of Lords.

Grassroots input was also sought and a template letter was provided with which to contact our individual MP. I sent this out to all those who supported our special Domestic Abuse weekend on November 23RD/24TH 2019. I myself wrote to my own M.P. but as yet, have had no response. Can I ask that anyone who, like me, wrote to their MP let me know if they received any acknowledgement and, if so, what that reply contained.

Covid and Brexit combined have had an impact on the Domestic Abuse Bill itself, slowing down its progress through the system. It still has to go to the House of Lords, passing first through the Scrutiny Committee, something that should already have happened.

Domestic Abuse is here with us in our Churches and our MU where we have 16 Days of Activism every year. However 16 days is not enough, we should be active in our opposition to abuse 365 days. To achieve this we all have to take responsibility and work with determination to eradicate this shame in our society wherever and whenever it exists.

Sylvia Hickey V.P.

EVERY CLOUD . . .

At the end of January I was watching a really good film on TV and crunching nuts with gusto when "crack" went a molar. The offending tooth had been repaired in the past, and after removing the broken bit and experiencing no pain I was very much relieved. Aware that I had my usual check up at the beginning of April I thought no more about it. Then came LOCKDOWN.

In the middle of August I felt trouble was brewing but I lasted until the first week in September before phoning the dentist. I went through the triage system and visited the practice, had an x-ray and was informed it had to come out but because of an abscess I needed a course of antibiotics. The security and safety measures at the dentist were second to none, I saw the same dentist and nurse on each of my three visits. There were two sessions to try to remove this bothersome tooth. It was whilst awaiting the novocaine to do its work during the final meeting that we all got chatting. I mentioned MU and was enthusiastically attempting to relate the work we do and our efforts in the refuges when I felt pressure on my shoulder. I turned my head to be faced with my wonderful nurse who told me that MU had given her help when she had had to flee from domestic violence to a refuge. It definitely took my mind off my immediate worries. After some time the attempt to remove the root was aborted and I was referred to the Dental Hospital. I thanked them for their endeavours and left feeling very down-hearted but this quickly changed when, as I ascended the stairs to leave, my nurse thanked me for all the work we do and would I make sure to let you know what a difference we make. She has gone on to be an amazing dental nurse and is so grateful that we were there when she needed us. Needless to say it made my year.

M T-B

THE OCTOBER COUNCIL MEETING

Our speaker at this meeting (held over Zoom) was John O'Connor; if you missed the meeting you missed a very moving talk. John, who is married with two daughters (one of whom joined us briefly as she needed to kiss daddy good-night), spoke to us very vividly of his background and his faith journey. He grew up in Felling with three brothers in a violent family, with his father and uncles repeat offenders, and crime was the only way of life they knew. After his father killed his mother the children were sent to live with their maternal grandparents. He told us that he resembled his father physically, and he felt his grandparents hated him. He was a constant reminder of the man who had taken their daughter from them, so they were not supportive of him at all.

Over the next seven or eight years he became a regular offender, doing time in all the prisons in the North East and Scotland. By chance he had met a former school-mate who had become a born-again Christian and this friend had prayed over him. He had felt the power of the Holy Spirit though he continued to steal to finance his drug habit. While he was serving a sentence in Durham Prison he had suddenly remembered the power of that prayer, and at that moment he gave up drugs. He said he still thought 'like an opportunist thief', but his old friend had not judged him, and eventually he allowed the Holy Spirit to take over his life.

He managed to give up his life of crime and developed a work ethic; he is now a successful property developer and works closely with Junction 42 talking to prisoners. He stressed to us that violent men need a different style of worship from that usually offered by mainstream churches, but it is important to keep preaching the Gospel message because he knows from his own experience that it works.

He concluded his very moving talk by quoting Romans 1 v.16: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes". Though at the moment our ability to help Junction 42 is limited by the effects of COVID-19, we can all pray for the work that this wonderful organisation is doing among those generally considered the dregs of our society.

COVID-19 ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Elaine Nylander, originally from Sierra Leone, now a MU member of our new on-line branch has researched for us the situation in her home country, with which we have a Diocesan link in Bo. Overseas links are notoriously hard to maintain, so we are extremely grateful to Elaine for her input.

Sierra Leone suffered hugely with Ebola so it is comforting to see that Covid has not had such a devastating effect. It is good to know how M.U. members in other countries are affected. So thank you Elaine.

Sylvia Hickey VP

As of 23 October:

2,343 confirmed cases; 74 deaths, 175 in quarantine

Why are Covid Cases so low in Sierra Leone?

- The Government has imposed a number of 3-day lockdowns since April 2020
- Testing done at airport, two government hospitals and Covid centre in Freetown
- The country has a young population
- People spend a lot of time in well-ventilated homes or outside

Conclusion – just not testing enough to monitor the outbreak?

BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER LOCK-DOWN

St John's Whorlton MU had our first proper meeting for months on Wednesday 7th October, a Eucharist in church thanks to our Vicar Revd Matthew Hunter. There were about a dozen of us, all socially distanced as per the guidelines. Normally we would have had a service with guests followed by tea.

At the beginning of lockdown I had asked for knitted squares; a friend in a difficult place mentally responded and it gave her a purpose. A member took on the task of crocheting them into blankets after sorting them into colour match. She was helped by a church friend who did a couple. During our service Matthew blessed nine blankets, the fruits of their labour and one made by another member Pam. Our Anna Chaplain Anne Morris will distribute them with a member when lockdown eases.

It was so good to be able to worship together as a Branch and appreciate each other through our worship – we waited a long time....

Anne Blight



This photograph of Alnmouth & Lesbury branch was taken on 15 March in Alnmouth at our last service for almost four months; when we were next in church life was very different.

The service was taken by Ian MacKarill. My husband Barrie became a member of the MU and Gail and I swapped roles: she is now branch secretary and I am having a go at being branch leader. The photograph shows some of the branch members who supported us in the service.

MU was very quick to respond to Lockdown and has been supplying leaders with wonderful resources for home worship and spiritual support. Many non members have also benefited from having access to these. We have also been sent daily 'funny' emails to help lift spirits. And then along came ZOOM! We have been enjoying weekly Tea and Talk afternoon Zooms. Members from other branches heard about these and we now have members from Upper Coquetdale, Amble, Newcastle and Durham joining us! Lots of laughs and sharing of news. For some of our members this has shown a way forward for meetings, especially in the winter months. The Indoor Members secretary is also very interested in this as a way of keeping some members connected. Yes it all depends on having the equipment to be able to log on, but it is something to think about.

Helen Cooper, Branch leader

MOTHERS' UNION RETREAT 31 May-1 June 2021

Wherever we live in God's wonderful world, all of us have been living through the most unusual year that any of us can remember. That is why Mothers' Union has chosen the theme "Rebuilding Hope and Confidence" for 2021. As Christians and MU members we know from whence we receive the strength to work through the difficult times, and at our retreat at Shepherd's Dene I hope we can share this encouragement and, in a safe environment, share our hope and confidence for the future.

Jennie Jones (Retreat Leader)

The retreat is a mixture of peace and quiet reflection with time out for friendship and interaction. Revd Malcolm Jones will join us to celebrate the Eucharist on the second day.

Cost of the 2 days, including 1 night residential, is £100.00

Individual days £25, inc. coffee on arrival, light lunch, tea before departure; supper on first evening £20 extra.

Most bookings from the cancelled 2020 retreat have transferred to next year. If you wish to join us for the 2021 retreat please send name, address, phone no., details of which days you require and £20 deposit to Jackie Moore, 30 Cotswold Gardens, Newcastle, NE7 7AE.



Diamond Wedding Anniversary
 Congratulations to Judith and John Bradley, both members of the Belford Mothers' Union. They married on 23rd July 1960, at the Church of St John, Nevilles Cross, Durham City.

John and Judith thanked all who sent cards, flowers and good wishes which helped them to

celebrate this auspicious occasion properly, even in the current lockdown. Fay Colman is seen presenting the couple with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Belford Mother' Union. Judith has been a member of the Mothers' Union since 2009 and John since 2014.



Our Branch at St Columba's Church, Wideopen., founded in 1996, will celebrate its 25th anniversary in January 2021. Long service certificates, recognising 25 years of membership of Mothers' Union, will be awarded to the following members, when corona virus restrictions are no longer in place: Vera Cartwright, Marjorie Fairbairn, Kathleen Hulley, Mary Lobb, Mary Moody, Dorothy Todd and Norma Tully.



Revd Richard and Liz Ferguson (Stannington Branch Leader) celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary at home on Saturday 31 October.

They married in 1970 in Liverpool. Yes, it was at Hallowe'en but there were no tricks or treats.

They have been blessed with four wonderful children, and despite the COVID restrictions, enjoyed a tasty meal at the Ridley Arms, and then watched a marvellous video with lots of messages from family and friends.

Their son Peter, a computer whizz, set it up so all the family could all join in.



Retired Bishop Martin Wharton and his wife Marlene, who is a Diocesan member, celebrated their Golden Wedding in August. They married on 29 August 1970 at Holy Trinity church, Holme (near Kendal) in Cumbria, and held their reception in Arnside overlooking Morecambe Bay.

They have three children and six grandchildren and are enjoying their retirement in Teddington, Richmond on Thames



From our Chaplain:

"Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow"

There is no doubt it has been a strange year, and we have lost much, but we have also gained much... thanks to the versatility and resilience of our churches we have found and embraced new ways of meeting together and worshipping together, even if we have had to maintain physical distance. We have also developed a new appreciation of our church meeting spaces, and the fellowship we enjoy within our meetings and shared spaces.

One thing I have missed and continue to miss is communal singing. I still sing along to the radio and CDs and the community choir I'm a part of still meets online, but that is not the same as the feeling of singing together. I was reminded of a hymn today in (yet another) Zoom meeting, Great is thy Faithfulness... especially the phrase I chosen as a title today. For me it sums up our faith: through Jesus we have strength to face whatever today brings and in his glorious resurrection we have hope for tomorrow. What more could we ask for?

As we move into Advent, the start of the church year, my prayer is that we can do so hopefully, we are a hopeful pilgrim people, and that hope is not based on mindless optimism, rather that we are children of God who loves us, God who is faithful, God who keeps his promises. That promise is not that we will be protected from the trials of the world, rather that when we face hardship we never do so alone; God is with us – Emmanuel!

Revd Dr Sarah Moon



A group of mums with children at Scremerston School, who met every Tuesday in the Community Room prior Covid 19, were reflecting on how difficult it was when their own children had to start school. They decided, inspired by Anne Bradley (a MU member) who runs the group, to make COMFORT BAGS for the next intake of new mums and pupils. She'd read about it in our Mothers Union magazine. The handmade bags were given out by the reception teacher on

the first day of term to the mums of children who were starting school for the first time. These were very well received.

THE FIRST MEMBER OF EMBLETON MOTHERS' UNION

"Monday January 27th 1879" Dearest Mother, I started my mothers' meeting today and ten came which Max thinks very good to begin with, if only they go on. I want the young ones most and I had four of them, and shall hope for more another time. I read and discoursed to them, it was tiresome having such a cold as I got choky but still not as much as I had feared. I spent most of my afternoons last week going round to hunt them up, and did a deal of visiting. I am so glad to find that I grow to like the people more and more, only there are so many that it is impossible to see enough of them all."

These are the words of a letter written by Louise, the wife of the Revd Mandell Creighton, Vicar of Embleton. Fortunately her mother kept this and all her letters. Louise had no doubt been inspired by the work of Mary Sumner, and their lifelong friendship and enthusiasm continued when the MU became national and world-wide. We have three accurate records of those early days:

1. The letters to Louise's mother.
2. After Mandell Creighton died in 1901 as Bishop of London, Louise wrote a two volume biography of his life with many details of their ten years in Embleton.
3. In 2000 an American Professor, James Covert, had access to their records and published a biography – "A Victorian Marriage" now available in libraries.

For the Creightons their ten years in Embleton were very happy and busy. They came with two children, had four while here, did massive improvements on the old mediaeval tower vicarage and garden, a curate and his wife and family shared the house, also they often had residential paying pupils for coaching. They travelled four times, without the family, to Italy for Mandell's research on his writing of a History of the Papacy and together they wrote thirteen history primer books etc. They were both much involved in very lively parish life, often walking together to Newton or Craster to visit parishioners and entertaining visitors. But Louise always found time to write her weekly letter to her mother.

Louise said, "I wanted to give the mothers some religious help and tried having them read books, but it was difficult to find what just suited them. I made up my mind that I must discourse to them myself." So Louise adapted herself to manage the meetings. "About sixteen women used to come and there were generally several babies or older children who ran about. Sitting on a level with them, I had to hold forth. Of course they never spoke. I suppose they liked it. For me this was the school where I learned how to speak, and certainly speaking in that little room to that group of women was more trying than I found speaking in the Albert Hall or the Queen's Hall in later years."

March 10th 1879 "Today I had a good mothers' meeting as it was a fine day. I had a dish of lentils brought them down to taste."

November 30th 1880 "I have started my mothers' meetings now every Monday."

"For a long time I used to prepare full notes – but it was impossible to know what the women thought about it. We met in a gloomy little room." (the room is still in use but not now gloomy!)

Louise's "Mothers (later MU) Meetings" at Embleton continued until Mandell's Ministry took him to Cambridge in 1884 and eventually on to become Bishop of London. Louise's support for MU and other organisations – the Girls Friendly Society, women's rights, rescue, and others - continued for the rest of her life.

Her ashes were laid to rest in 1936 in Mandell's grave in St Paul's Cathedral.

Rosalind Malthouse

MULOA as never before

There is a young (?) woman called Lesley
Her other name it is Wright
She still wants our news
Though we're not in the pews
So here goes, we'll give her a fright!

We haven't been meeting together
But have passed many hours on the phone,
Spent time every day
Checking all were OK
'Specially members who live on their own

Although we've been forced to be parted
The bond that's between us seems strong
Know more of each other
Than sister or mother
As the calls have got longer than long

We've talked about ops and appointments
Cataracts, flu jabs and pain -
We've LISTENED, OBSERVED
And ACTED unnerved -
Just wish we could all meet again

*Pam Taylor
All Saints, Gosforth*

*I'm flattered (I think) by being described as 'young'!
Ed.*

MIDDAY PRAYERS

ON FACEBOOK OR PHONE

Mothers' Union Midday Prayers, led by Mary Sumner House staff members and many others around the UK and Ireland are available live at midday on Facebook, Monday to Saturday; they are also available on YouTube later.

We know that many of our members are unable to access Facebook or YouTube, but this time of prayer and reflection is also available on the Church of England Hope phone line, which is free. Please just dial 0800 805 8055 and for MU Midday Prayers choose option 4 then option 8.

This is something that is so worthwhile. I know of one member who just loves to phone in to listen to the prayers and, she tells me, she continues to listen to the hymn singing which follows.

Sheila Walker VP

Birthdays Anniversaries Obituaries

BIRTHDAYS

80 Sylvia Turnbull Earsdon/Backworth
Mabel Henderson Earsdon/Backworth
Kath Richardson Earsdon/Backworth
Betty Wall, Holy Saviour Tynemouth

90 Jean Heslop, St Philip & St Matthew
Maggie Mundangepfufu, St Philip & St Matthew
Joan Finley, St Philip & St Matthew
Margaret Cavanagh Earsdon/Backworth

95 Rita Tough (pictured here with her daughter Shaun—apologies for reporting Rita as 15 years younger in the Summer Almost Journal)



ANNIVERSARIES

50 years Bill and Christine Birrell; Christine is a member of Earsdon/Backworth
Ken and Linda Boynton; Linda is a member of Seaton Hirst
Alan and Revd Joan Dotchin; Joan is a member of Holy Saviour, Tynemouth
Revd Richard and Liz Ferguson; Liz is a member of Stannington
John and Joan Kean; Joan is a member of Holy Saviour, Tynemouth
Ken and Sandra Rusby; Sandra is a member of Ovingham
Bishop Martin and Marlene Wharton; Marlene is a diocesan member
60 years John and Judith Bradley; both are members of Belford
Gordon and Elsie Rankin; Elsie is a member of St Bede's Newsham
John and Sadie Scott; Sadie is a member of Seaton Hirst
John and Betty Wall; Betty is a member of Holy Saviour, Tynemouth

DEATHS

Margaret A'Court, Blyth
Joyce Armstrong, Haydon Bridge
Dorothy Arrowsmith, Ovingham
Elsie Brindley, Upper Coquetdale
Jean Brown, Holy Cross Fenham
Cathy Catchpole, Indoor Member
Doreen Davidson, Indoor Member
Lesley Davison, Holy Cross Fenham
Shirley Day, Indoor Member
Cathy Falconer, St Paul Choppington
(the first spinster MU member!)

Ann Fenwick, Ovingham
Joyce Graham, Holy Cross Fenham
Jean Harrison, Norham
Molly Henderson, Morpeth
Jane Johnson, Holy Cross Fenham
Frances Mason, Norham
Edna Morley, Indoor Member
Doris Philipson, Holy Cross Fenham
Mary Robson, Ovingham
Betty Rumens, St Gabriel Heaton
Dorothy Sacco, Holy Cross Fenham
Pat Stewart, St Bede's Newsham
Doris Tait, Upper Coquetdale
Mary Wardle, St Gabriel Heaton
Barbara Weatheritt, Bothal Longhirst
Hebron Ulgham Widdrington
Audrey Welford, St Gabriel Heaton
Frances Wheeler, Ovingham
Anne Yeaman, Stannington

Calendar

December 2020

30th November – 2nd December Wave of Prayer (service sheet available from Branch Leaders)

4th Shoe Box Day: collection only at Church House, 11.30-12 noon

5th Service on YouTube for the 16 Days of Activism from 2 p.m.

Some Deanery Advent Carol Services cancelled though some may proceed —check with your Branch Leader

2021

January 8th Trustees' meeting at 10 a.m.
February 20th Copy date for Spring Newsletter
March 12th Trustees' meeting at 10 a.m.
April 16th Council meeting at 10 a.m.
17th Friends' meeting and AGM at 10 a.m.
May 15th Diocesan Eucharist or Service at 11 a.m.
May 31st – June 1st Diocesan Retreat, leaders Jennie & Malcolm Jones
June 11th Trustees' meeting at 10 a.m.
July 10th Diocesan Festival
September 17th Trustees' meeting at 10 a.m.
24th Annual Gathering Service, Belfast
25th Annual gathering meeting
October 8th Council meeting at 7 p.m.
9th Friends' meeting at 10 a.m.
November 6th End of Triennium Provincial Service, Liverpool Cathedral 3 p.m.
December 3rd Shoe Box Day, Church House

website: www.munewcastle.org.uk

email: journalandnewsletter@munewcastle.org.uk

All events will take place on Zoom if necessary, with links published for phone and internet access. Otherwise venues will be published later.