

Welcome to the Annual
Gathering in York
By John...

The Journal



Winter 2023

**Annual Gathering and
Service in York -
see pages 8-10**



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Charity number 249971

Diocese of Newcastle



RETREAT AT SHEPHERDS DENE

Monday 24th – Tuesday 25th June 2024

Our retreat gives us the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful surroundings at Shepherds Dene, with time for fellowship and fun as well as times of silence and reflection.

Our leader will be the Revd. Robert Lawrance, Vicar of St Francis, Heaton. His theme is 'Hope in a hot climate.' In a time of global uncertainty, Robert draws on the spiritual teaching of St Francis of Assisi to offer a positive vision for the future.

DETAILS

The residential cost will be £140. The daily cost will be £40, with an additional cost of £28 for the evening meal on the first day.

For further information please contact Jackie Moore, whose contact details are alongside. Please complete the booking form and return to Jackie (at 30 Cotswold Gardens, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7AE) with a £20 deposit for residential or £10 for each individual day.

BOOKING FORM

Name Branch

Address

Telephone no.

Email

Dietary requirements

I require transport/ have transport and can take passengers

I do / do not need an ensuite room (limited availability)

I am non-residential and shall attend on

Monday / Tuesday / both days

I will / will not stay for the evening meal on Monday

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Diocese of Newcastle

OFFICERS 2023

DIOCESAN PRESIDENT:

Mrs Margy Tasker-Brown

Tel: 01669 064 0203

Email: president@munewcastle.org.uk

VICE PRESIDENTS:

Mrs Anne Blight (Northumberland)

Tel: 0191 267 09074

Email: vpnorthumberland@munewcastle.org.uk

Mrs Anne Cairns (Lindisfarne)

Tel: 01661 612 640

Email: vplindisfarne@munewcastle.org.uk

FAITH & POLICY:

Mrs Jackie Moore

Tel: 0191 281 1325

Email: faith@munewcastle.org.uk

ACTION & OUTREACH:

Revd Diana Macnaughton

Tel: 01289 332 726

Email: actionandoutreach@munewcastle.org.uk

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS:

Mrs Linda Benneworth

Tel: 0191 290 3479

Email: marketing@munewcastle.org.uk

DIOCESAN MEMBERS CO-ORDINATOR:

Mrs Sylvia Hickey

Tel: 0191 236 6450

Email: billandsylviahickey@btinternet.com

YOUNG FAMILIES' CO-ORDINATOR:

Mrs Karoline Wellborne

Tel: 0191 680 2757

Email: k.wellborne@live.co.uk

SECRETARY:

Mrs Sandra Davison

Tel: 01670 811 487

Email: sandiedav@hotmail.com

TREASURER:

Mr Julian Brown

Tel: 07962 710 045

Email: julianbrown180851@gmail.com

JOURNAL EDITOR:

Canon Barbara Packer

Tel: 0191 253 4321

Email: barbara@munewcastle.org.uk

THE JOURNAL - DESIGN:

Mark Comer Design 4 Print

Tel: 07956 612 461

Email: comer171@yahoo.co.uk

WEBSITE MANAGER:

Elizabeth Dean

Email: website@munewcastle.org.uk

Find us on Facebook and see

www.munewcastle.org.uk for more contacts

President's Letter



Dear Friends,

I have just been doing our yearly reports to various bodies and am amazed at how many lives we touch. This year our total number of beneficiaries is 1922. I am so very proud of our achievements.

Sadly our AFIA leader, Margaret Crawforth, is ending her long and valuable tenure on 31st of December. We thank her for her unstinting service and hope her health continues to improve.

There will be many changes in the coming years and we must embrace them. My own challenge has been IT. Slowly but surely I am getting better. I am no longer afraid of the laptop on the desk. Sometimes it is even logical if you have the time to think about it.

My "go to" prayer at the moment, "Do it anyway," was used by Mother Teresa and was found in her cell after her death – it is printed on the right. Let's think of that as we move into another year.

With love, *Margy*

Mother Teresa's Prayer – 'Do it Anyway'

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

TIMES AND SEASONS – from our Chaplain, The Revd Anne Marr

NINETY is a fair age to reach – especially if you're in good health and reasonably sound mind!

Derek (my husband) celebrated his 90th birthday on 14th October: the anniversary of the Battle of Hastings in 1066 when William conquered Britain and changed the course of history. This year, 957 years later, we lifted a glass to Derek, to history in its unfolding, and the birth of a great grandchild.

There are times and circumstances when birthdays and other celebrations may be eclipsed in the raw battle for survival. The Battle of Hastings was not the first war in history – nor the last. October saw horrific events unfold in what we call the 'Holy Land'. Jews, Christians and Muslims, the three religions of 'The Book', all hold this land 'sacred' for different and valid reasons in their faith history. Sadly, our deeply entrenched beliefs have led to conflict throughout history, not least in the 'Holy Land'. It has always



been so! Perhaps now is a time to ask 'Must it always be so?'

Advent is a time for waiting: to wait for the coming of God's promised Word – the promise of peace and justice in the world. May this Advent be a time to stop amidst the seasonal Santa hype and to pray for those caught in the terrible turmoil of war; a time to pray for the advent of peace and mercy, justice and dignity amongst those who live in this 'holy land'.

Advent guides us to **Christmas** and a time to celebrate: a time to celebrate God's longing to bring peace and justice to a troubled world; a time to celebrate the unfolding of God's Word in the shape of a defenceless, vulnerable baby – a baby saviour born amidst the tensions in an occupied 'holy land', where expectations of liberation were high; a time for hope to be reborn, nurtured and released from fear.

Christmas leads us to a time of awakening: an Epiphany of the way in which we have messed up



the life God gave us; an **Epiphany** of the inclusive mercy and forgiveness that God longs for us to accept; an Epiphany of the opportunities for a new way of living in God's unfolding Kingdom – a land of justice and peace and Yes! LOVE.

May this be a timely season to accept the gift of Love – a Love for God; a Love for our neighbours next door and the neighbours we will never meet; a Love for the planet and the environment; a Love that listens, a Love that forgives, a Love that is born and abides in those places we call 'holy'.

May the God of Love nestle in beside you and hold you safe.

Anne

Reverend Sheila takes the bus



Sheila takes the bus

AT the grand age of 85, I accepted the challenge to travel from Newcastle to Chichester using only local buses and my free senior bus pass. I set off on the 5th of June, intending to take six days, one of these being 8th June where I would enjoy a day off and a look around Coventry.

My first bus was the Go North East Angel bus which made me feel that my departure from Newcastle was truly blessed. Once I had begun my journey my apprehension disappeared, and I really began to enjoy the adventure. As I progressed, buses took me deep into the luscious June countryside and God's creation, spectacular when viewed from the top deck of a

bus. On the smaller buses the locals made sure I didn't miss a landmark of any kind. Beautiful scenery and beautiful people.

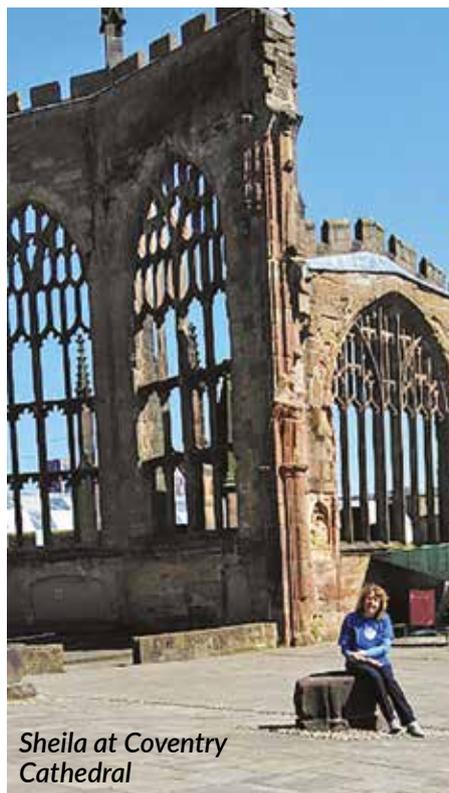
I travelled on 26 buses on my 'trek', some very plush with the latest technology (Wi-fi etc.) on board; others, little boneshakers, country buses full of chat and camaraderie.

Nights were spent with friends and MU members. I stayed with the MU episcopal president of Ripon in the diocese of Leeds, Margaret Crawford and husband Peter and there met Heather Powling, branch leader for the Ripon Cathedral branch. In Rotherham I stayed with long term MU member, Margaret Tupling, and there met Gill and Geof Fellows; Gill is President of Sheffield MU.

I received really warm welcomes from all of these and enjoyed my time with them so much.

I was shown Ripon cathedral and Rotherham Chapel-on-the-bridge and many more places of interest. My trip became a pilgrimage, noting connections in the cathedrals and churches – St Wilfrid, St Michael and so on. I met wonderful characters as I travelled on, and though I was on my own, not once did I feel lonely. I was struck by how much kindness and care I was met with wherever I went.

My stop in Coventry, gave me a chance to look at the Cathedrals



Sheila at Coventry Cathedral



Sheila with her sister

and to join the worship at Evensong. Refreshed after my Coventry stop, I went on my way again completing the next two days as expected and arriving at Chichester Cathedral on Saturday 10th to be met by my sister and be rewarded with a glass of cold white wine and a week's relaxation to look forward to.

I have to say a big thank you to my son John who mapped and planned my route. It was spot-on.

Thanks also to so many others who supported and encouraged me, including all St Gabriel's MU members, who worked so hard raising and collecting sponsorship money. Many thanks too, to everyone who donated to our funds, which will be mainly going to the work of Newcastle Diocese MU. AFIA project.

I thank the Lord, that my journey was safe and a success. I was given a post-card before the start of my travels and carried it with me throughout. It read, 'I am with you, wherever you may go.' and I sincerely believe that is true. Thanks be to God.

Sheila Auld
(Branch Leader, St Gabriel, Heaton)

EDITOR'S NOTE: to date, £1,300 has been raised for AFIA through GoFundMe, and another £1,300 from St Gabriel's, for which the Gift Aid money has yet to be calculated: what an amazing result!

AFIA (Away from It All) holidays 2023



This year we have concentrated on helping families where at least one of the children has a disability. The sponsorship money from Sheila Auld's trip has helped fund several such holidays, along with grants and money raised throughout the year by other branches and members. The family shown here particularly enjoyed their holiday and wanted us to know about the difference it



had made, particularly, to their non-verbal son.

During the latter part of the year, we have concentrated on Awaydays for groups of families, and Christmas events.

At the end of December, our AFIA rep, Margaret Crawford, is retiring from the role. She has enabled and supported hundreds of holidays and



Awaydays over the years, working with many families to get them just the kind of holiday which they need. She has had good relationships with several local charities to support their work by providing holidays and Awaydays for their clients. We, and they, are very grateful!

Editor

Margaret Crawford and fishermen's hats

Margaret Crawford continues to support the fishermen at the North Shields Fishermen Mission by buying and giving thermal hats to them. If you would like to help, just get in touch with Margaret.

On behalf of the fishermen, thank you Margaret.



A Big Thank You

I would like to give a big thank you to everyone connected with shopping and packing Hospital Emergency Toiletry Bags.



My five year old, Granddaughter (along with Mum) had an unexpected overnight stay in Cramlington Hospital recently, straight from school.

They really appreciated the Mothers' Union emergency toiletry bags!

Happily twenty-four hours later she was back to normal.

Thank you so much!

Canon Jennifer Snowdon

Christmas Special for Domestic Abuse Refuge

On December 22nd last year I delivered 16 very large gift bags, one for each family unit, containing a full Christmas Day fresh food menu for lunch and tea.

Tesco put the large order together for me and I am hoping that they will do the same again this year. St Mary's Ponteland and St Columba's Wideopen branch members have already agreed to work with my First Internet branch to make this happen again this year. No branch or grant funds are used. All monies for this project are donated by individual members.

With the cost of food remaining so high Harbour Refuge is extremely grateful that the families there can be assured that they will have normal Christmas Day food again this year. Isn't this just what MULO was all about, suppling, where possible, what our clients tell us they need?

Sylvia Hickey



Contents of a 'Comfort bag' for parents of children starting school or nursery. 60 of these bags were made by All Saints, Gosforth MU for Archbishop Runcie School.



Hospital bags and prem baby clothes

Julie Lingham is a retired nurse who has built up links with staff at Cramlington Emergency Care Centre and Wansbeck hospital. Julie belongs to the MU at Holy Sepulchre, Ashington. Upper Coquetdale MU branch have also knitted hats, mittens, and blankets for premature babies.



Prisoner 'Fresh Start' backpacks: RUCKSACKS FOR PRISONERS ON THEIR DAY OF RELEASE

Prisoner rucksacks are given through a prison charity for which some MU members volunteer, to prisoners who have no family to go to on the day of their release. After they have made the long journey by bus from Acklington in Northumberland to Tyneside, they need a change of clothes the following day to be presentable to sign on and to look for accommodation, and work.

This gift could make the difference between a prisoner sinking or swimming on their release. Often a Branch will put together one or more rucksacks full of gifts.

Contents:

- Toiletries: soap, disposable razors, toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, deodorant, nail clippers
- Small towel, flannel
- Underwear (boxers), socks
- T shirt

- Jogging bottoms (not grey, as that is the colour of prison wear)
- Fleece or jacket
- gloves and woollen hat

The collection points for Prisoner rucksacks are:

- FOR NORTH TYNESIDE: Linda Benneworth
lindabenneworth@sky.com who is visited by Norma Willmott, who coordinates MU prison volunteering and rucksacks once a month
- FOR NEWCASTLE: Lillian Broatch
lillianbroatch@live.co.uk She is happy to collect
- FOR NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND: Diana Macnaughton
dmacnaughton18@gmail.com · 07789199337
10 Glamis Hill, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 1NX

Other initiatives throughout the year...

HOSPITAL BAGS are for patients admitted as an emergency to any of the hospitals in our Diocese, when they have not had the opportunity to pack.

They contain: Toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, showergel, paper handkerchiefs, a comb; some contain disposable razors for male patients, others might contain deodorant, or a card.

HOSPITAL BAGS collection to go through Julie Lingham lawjuad@btinternet.com 07828987980 who lives in Ashington, and visits Cramlington Emergency Care Centre, and Wansbeck Hospital.

Lillian Broatch lillianbroatch@live.co.uk would also be willing to collect for Newcastle and North Tyneside

COMFORT BAGS for parents of children starting school or nursery. Contents are as shown in the picture on page 6.

Diana Macnaughton, Action & Outreach Coordinator

Shaun the Sheep



Mothers' Union members knitted more than 20 Shaun the sheep for the Cathedral as part of St Oswald's Hospice fund-raising campaign.

The Cathedral joined enthusiastically in the 'Shaun the Sheep on the Tyne' Art trail, in which thousands took part, searching for Shaun.

Diana Macnaughton, A&O Coordinator

FAITH in ACTION by
Mothers' UNION
in Newcastle Diocese



St Cuthbert's knitters

Mothers' Union Annual Gathering 2023

On a beautiful Autumn morning we made our way to the Barbican in York to attend the Annual Gathering together with over 700 members and guests all eager to meet in Christian Fellowship.

On gaining entry using our barcode tickets (tech works!), we were handed our program and a little packet of sweets. We took our seats in this wonderful building and received a warm Yorkshire welcome from Hilary Castle, Diocesan President of York, who was then joined by Bev Jullien CEO.

Bishop John Packer, York Provincial Chaplain began with a prayer, "Lord God, who makes all things new, we gather together in your name" – reminding us what this important day was all about.

June Houghton, York Provincial President, and Hilary brought laughter and fun into the day when they put on leather motorcycle jackets with Cross motif on the back. They then introduced members of the Harley Davidson Owners Group onto the stage. Along with their other MU initiatives held over last year the bikers have raised and donated monies to AFIA. Hilary and June commented "little things make a difference and never judge a book by its cover".

Our Worldwide President Sheran Harper reminded us to "step boldly forward and the Lord will guide you always". She introduced to us her teddy bear, "Alex the Pilgrim", her symbol to stand against domestic abuse. This highlighted our new campaign entitled "Rise up against Domestic Abuse". She received a

standing ovation following her many words of hope and love to give us inspiration. She referred to us as "Her beloved friends".

Mary Sumner House and the Reimagining Steering Group gave updates on the financial situation at present and the challenges which lie ahead. They thanked everyone for their generosity and fundraising. The emerging mantra came out as "Grow membership, Grow funds to move into the future – Mothers' Union to infinity and beyond".

Bishop Emma Ineson of Kensington, MU Central Chaplain, highlighted the need to develop stronger links between the Clergy and MU, "Building bridges wherever we go will help us on our way". York Diocesan Chaplain Revd John Ford supported this further, reminding us that the Clergy need our support and prayers at this moment in time. There was an open discussion with the audience putting forward examples of how this could be moved forward.

As the day came to a close we were "Called to Action" by both Sheran and Bev who reminded us "With God nothing is impossible – we are starting on a new adventure together". Sheran blessed us all and asked if we would journey with her from "Transformation Now" to "Transformation in Action".

Bishop John Thomson of Selby brought this amazing event to a close with prayer. We made our way from the Barbican in a torrential downpour to arrive rather soggy but elated to York Minster for Evensong.

Anne Cairns, Vice-President for Lindisfarne Archdeaconry

The heavens opened – MU in York Minster

In true biblical fashion it rained in York – just for an hour – as we walked from the conference centre to the Minster. We arrived as drowned rats to be reassured by the Canon in Residence that, in York, the rain always falls on the righteous!

There were over 1000 people in the Minster: 700 MU members and lots of others keen to know what was going on (and sheltering from the rain!) The choir was inspiring. The refurbished organ lifted us to a new stratospheric level of praise.



Sheran Harper

The NT reading was from Revelation 21.1-4 and was read by our WW President, Sheran Harper. *'...and I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband....'*

At the end of all the evening prayers, the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, Lord Archbishop of York, addressed the congregation.

'The heavens opened' he said, referring not only to the rain in York but to the reading from Revelation. *'When I read this passage about the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, dressed as a bride adorned for her husband, I can't help imagining a sea*



of Mothers' Union members dressed in blue and white! The image triggered the first of many responses of laughter during his address.

He spoke out of deep personal conviction and experience of the life-transforming work of Mothers' Union across the world: work reflecting the love of God in all the darkest places.

Did we realise that all the most important things happen in the dark? he asked – that Light comes out of the darkness? The world was created out of darkness. Jesus was born in the night. Jesus died under the darkest of skies. The resurrection occurred in the dark of night. Mary Sumner's vision came out of the dark experience of motherhood in difficult times.

Then he reminded us of another Mary... 'Mary Magdalene came to the tomb at the break of day.' he reminded us. 'She was the first to attend the tomb to care for the body – she was the first to go looking for Jesus – the first to recognise the Lord – the first to share the news with others.' He suggested that Mary Magdalene should be made an honorary member of Mothers Union! 'Mary Magdalene saw the Lord but thought he was the gardener.' ('Though in truth He IS the Gardener!') Jesus does not greet her with jubilant triumphalism. Instead,



Anne Marr, Sheran Harper and Bev Jullien

he says quietly – **'Why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?'** The response to those questions was transformative – for Mary and for the disciples and subsequently for the whole world.'

He suggested that these two questions of Jesus are the very questions that Mothers' Union asks in the darker corners of life: 'Why are you weeping? Who are you

looking for?' Two questions, which unlock the inside stories of those facing challenging circumstances and which lead to conversations and transformative actions. As members of Mothers' Union, he said, we simply need to be there in our communities – asking those two questions: **'Why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?'**

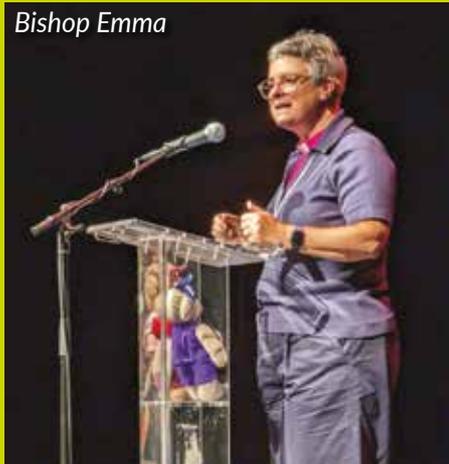
Anne Marr, Diocesan Chaplain



Faith in Action and Inside Stories – from the Chaplain

A FEW of us stayed in the Bar Convent in York. It has an inside story – hidden from the outside world during times in history when Catholicism was banned, with a chapel which is still hidden from the outside. It has faithfully championed education and hospitality for centuries and still does. Did you know?

Bishop Emma



We heard Sheran Harper tell the inside stories of some of the people she has met on her travels round the world. Many of them associated with domestic violence – often horrifying and very disturbing. There are many inside stories carried by people we know, people in our congregations and communities: stories of abuse hidden from public sight out of fear. ‘Stand with me!’ Sheran begged, ‘in working to get rid of domestic violence and abuse.’ The new RISE up campaign is part of that MU commitment. Do you know about it? Please heed Sheran’s request, **‘Stand with me to help combat domestic abuse.’**

Bishop Emma Ineson (our MU national Chaplain) asked ‘Why is MU the ‘best kept secret’ of the church in Britain and Ireland? Despite branches in thousands of churches, our ‘Faith in Action’ remains hidden from view, masked by a notion that we are about tea, cake and visiting speakers. Is our Faith in Action an ‘Inside Story’?

Bishop Emma reminded us that MU is called to stand in the gaps – the liminal, edgy or transitional places where no-one likes to remain for long. To **stand in the gaps...**



The Bar Convent group

- **between the Church and the World** – locally and globally – bringing the needs of the world to the church and bringing the hands of love from the church to the world;
- **between our Clergy and Communities** – building mission and ministry together.
- **between the ‘Now and the Not yet’** – turning despair into hope and helplessness into action.

She prayed us three gifts to equip and enable us:

- **Listening** – attentively – to one another and to God – to understand.
- **Peace-making** – through disagreements.
- **Faith** – nothing is impossible with God.

As your chaplain I also ask you to **stand by me** in our efforts in Newcastle Diocese to build fruitful relationships with our clergy – praying for their ministry, asking for their prayers for MU projects, building mission and ministry opportunities together in our local communities, and heeding the inside stories. It’s the little things that count – and God can make much of them. Did you know? Of course, you did!

St David of Wales counselled: **Be joyful. Keep the faith. Do the little things.**

Rise Up!

AS we walked from the Barbican to York Minster, many of us joined the Mothers’ Union march through the streets, carrying ‘RISE UP’ banners to highlight the evils of Domestic Abuse.

Despite the rain, we caused a stir, and people took notice. On arrival at the Cathedral, all the banners were taken in and set up, so that the message continued to be proclaimed to the congregation of members and others.

Editor

Respond
Inform **Unite**
Support **Pray**
Empower



Diocesan Festival at Rothbury on Saturday 10th June

Didn't we have a lovely time, the day we went to Rothbury.

The sun shone as we left for All Saints' Church in Rothbury for the Mothers' Union Diocesan Eucharist and a grand day out that was had by all who came.

The love shone as we were warmly welcomed, joining others, as we were treated to a coffee morning with delicious goodies to eat and a variety of stalls to browse and buy from.

The joy shone as many linked up in the church gardens for picnic lunches. The village provided a choice of cafes and pubs for lunch for others. We all enjoyed meeting up with old friends and making new friends in this beautiful, tranquil setting.

The peace shone as the Holy Eucharist started at 2pm, led by our chaplain Anne Marr and a variety of MU members. Anne, in her address, gave us the message that 'God loves us all', reflecting on how we could

spread this message in the world. She reminded us that our mission in the world was to serve others with humility and generosity of spirit. Working together allowed our many small acts of goodness to make a difference in the world. We can't save the world single handed but if we are united, we can change lives for the better.

The sun still shone as we left the village, the church and many friends. Our smiles shone the love, joy and peace of God that we had shared in our time together. May we all commit to take this message out into our lives and share it with others, as we work together for Mothers' Union.

Jackie Moore,
Faith & Policy Coordinator

Diocesan Council on 13th October 2023

A warm welcome with refreshments greeted members as we arrived on a pleasant afternoon at St John the Evangelist Church, Kingston Park, for our Mothers' Union Council meeting in October.

Margy opened the meeting by welcoming all. Worship was led

by Chaplain Anne Marr and Diana McNaughton and began with the words '**Lord God, who makes all things new, we gather in your name.**' Prayers followed a theme of Faith in Action with all joining together to sing 'Living Lord.'

Business followed, as previous minutes were agreed, Margy summarised MU work in the diocese over the past six months, giving thanks, and trustees gave news from their units.

Margy welcomed our speaker Melanie Hinson, Director of Primary Education at Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, to talk about the Story Sacks given to children in our diocese in a previous MU project. Melanie had taught in city schools before moving to become Head Teacher of Whalton Village School where she had worked for 10 years with Margy. She then moved to the Trust which oversaw a number of schools throughout the county educating children from two to eighteen. The Trust's values were Love, Inclusivity, Goodness, Hope and Truth. Her priority throughout her teaching career had been to put the child first, and to broaden their experience. Firmly believing that reading was essential, she aimed

to ensure that no child left school illiterate. This was challenging for many rural families where there were low expectations and poor transport links. Many families were in crisis. In many homes there was not a single book, so she had been very grateful for our help when we gave Story Sacks to her Early Years Unit to encourage reading and language, especially during COVID. Her talk was informative about the needs of children but was merged with many funny anecdotes of her time working with Margy.

We should have concluded with a video from The Gathering in York but the video was not available on the day. The meeting ended with us all saying the Grace.

Jackie Moore,
Faith & Policy Unit
Coordinator



The St George, Cullercoats group at the Diocesan Festival

SHADES OF GREEN – ASPECTS OF GODLY GARDENING

MU Retreat 19-20 June 2023 at Shepherd's Dene

In a green blouse and a leaf patterned skirt, Revd Anne Marr introduced us to the first of many Gardens, the 'Garden of Intention'. Imagining a garden where we've been happy, our "Garden of Eden" if you like, the colours, the scents, the sounds, we remembered all was not well in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had to leave. But God never meant us to be banished for ever, Jesus comes to restore us to our 'Garden of Life'.

It was fitting to celebrate a Eucharist in God's Garden of Intention, with great hymns – "All creatures of our God and King", "Lord of all hopefulness" and "Immortal, invisible God only wise" – we all sang lustily. The final prayer of the session concluded "Help us to restore the beauty and the balance of your gift to us."

Anne invited us to think where we might be in our 'Garden of Life' and suggested that after lunch (baked potatoes and a choice of fillings) we might create a mosaic or a collage of a tree, or a garden, reflecting our thoughts and prayers for the people

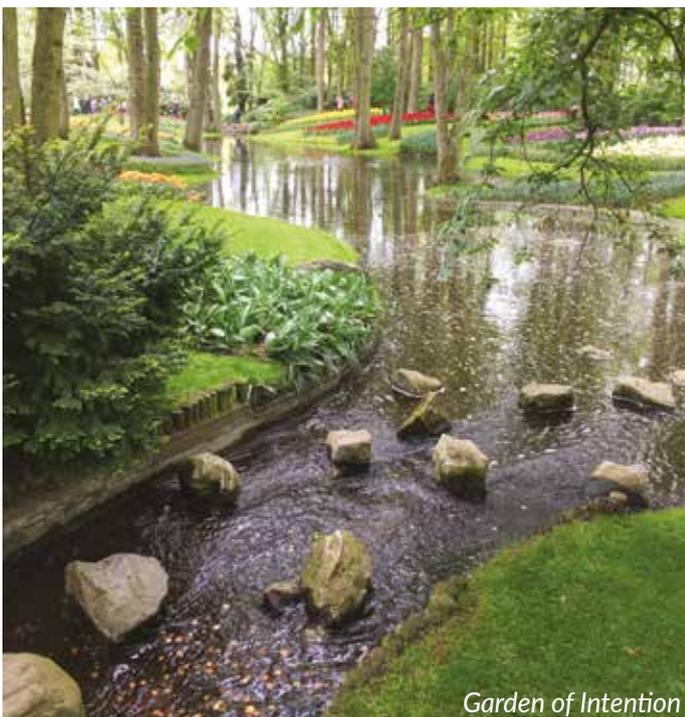
in God's Family Tree. Cutting tiles out of masses of green paint colour cards from a DIY store (unbelievable names!) some got creative, some went for a wander, and some just enjoyed the beautiful sunshine, chatting with friends old and new.

After tea (and cake) we reassembled in the 'Garden of Wilderness'. "Wilderness places" come in many forms, barren bomb sites or disorientating overgrowth, and sometimes we cannot see the bigger picture. Yet there is worth-ness there. Anne had created a lovely quiet corner for reflection in the Chapel with a glorious arrangement of wild flowers and leaves, things you'd attack if you found in your garden (see page 16). And the poem we read during the session talked about "cheerful unrepentant weeds: ... These weeds – as down to earth as you or me – are parables of the wisdom and work of God". So we moved from the 'Garden of Wilderness' to the 'Garden of Hope'. We may wonder what purpose we have in life, but we know we can play our part with God's help.



Jackie and her fellow members from St Francis led us in Compline after supper, following the Franciscan model which Barbara Bales led for us last year. It was good to think of Barbara who wasn't able to be with us this time. Anne gave us amazing facts about trees to read in case we couldn't sleep! There are 422 times more trees than people in the world.

Most of the 14 residents shared Morning Prayer before breakfast, taken from Celtic Daily Prayer using Monday's suggestions about Creation. Day visitors joined us in the 'Garden of Renewal', to remember our Indian Chestnut Tree planted in Howick Hall gardens. It should outlive our grandchildren. Our relationship with God needs to "stretch its branches towards the sun". After a lot of hot dry days we now had soft persistent rain, splashing in the gutters and



streaming down the windows; I felt all the bushes in the gardens thanked God for it.

Tuesday's Eucharist began in the 'Garden of Tears' but the second of two Gospels took us into the 'Garden of New Life'. Jesus calls us to be gardeners of the Word, to scatter seed, bringing it to new life. We sang "Morning has broken", "Now the green blade rises" and "How great thou art!" with Bernadette Farrell's

"Unless a grain of wheat" during Communion.

Afternoon activities included planting seeds, but most of us just chatted in the dining room until it was time to enter the 'Garden of Joy' where our mosaic pictures lay on the floor for us to admire. Jackie presented Anne with a plant as a token of our gratitude. The lovely photograph in the handout of the source of the Jordan was so unlike



Spring source of the River Jordan



The Group

what I imagined, it made me rethink my mental picture of "the river of the water of life" we'd read about in the Book of Revelation. The poems and prayers in the handouts were mostly taken (with permission) from "There was a Garden" by Eddie Askew. The final prayer began "Lord, whatever our story, wherever we find ourselves today, help us remember your story ..." and ended "Eden restored, the earth redeemed, and we are truly at home with you." It was a fitting conclusion.

Lesley Wright

CELEBRATING WITH NDAS

On June 28th 2023, Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services (NDAS) recognised their 20th anniversary at Wheelbirks Parlour, Stocksfield.

NDAS recognise that it is a bittersweet occasion because whilst they are still able to support hundreds of people living with and affected by domestic abuse in Northumberland, the fact that their services are still required and,



sadly, even more so, does of course overshadow this somewhat. That said, they are extremely proud to be able to offer these services despite having to weather some very challenging times.

The event was to bring together The NDAS team, sponsors, funders, partners, associates, and supporters who all play a vital part in helping to shape and inform the services provided. This list of supporters included Mothers' Union, and Margaret Crawforth and Linda Benneworth attended the event to represent the Newcastle Diocese. They were able to see the new supportive materials including information leaflets and posters, a mat, key ring and lip balm which all showed how to contact the service via a phone number and web site. The lip balm has as its bar code details of how to get help, just in case the abuser looks through a victim's handbag and sees an "innocent" balm. Mothers' Union were thanked for all the support which we give through holidays, away days, gifts for the refuges and craft sessions. We left feeling uplifted on behalf of all our members



who succeed in making the victims and their families feel so much better.

As Nici Dodd the Office Manager said "The holidays and day trips that Mothers' Union have offered over the years have had an invaluable impact on our clients. The freedom that these trips offer, both mentally and financially, to our clients and in particular their children, has such a positive impact. They are really grateful for the opportunity and always come back saying what a happy time they have had! We hope they continue!"

Linda Benneworth

AROUND THE DIOCESE

First Internet Branch Quiet Day

Some members of First Internet branch, with friends, at their Quiet Day held at the Northumbria Community on July 8th.

They were led by Rev Phil Carruthers from St Mary's Belford. Also in the picture Rev Catherine Askew and Chris Knowles from the Community.

Sylvia Hickey, Branch Leader



Diocesan Members Day Saturday 21st October 2023

Despite the inclement weather 17 people attended our Members day, sadly only seven of them were actual Diocesan Members. However those who did not respond to their invitation missed a really lovely morning. I myself opened the meeting with Morning Prayer followed by a quick update of all that is happening through outreach in our Diocese.

Our speaker, Vicky was a delight! She had spent ten years working as an optometrist in a Christian hospital at Mandritsara in Madagascar. She dressed in the typical costume of the country and gave us a real insight into her life and work there.

Vicky's fascinating talk was followed by a lively discussion resulting from the many questions which showed how much everyone had enjoyed listening to her.

Jackie Moore led Midday Prayers followed by our usual light lunch which also seemed to be much appreciated.

We meet again on Saturday 20th April 2024.

Sylvia Hickey, DM Coordinator

Helen Cooper talks about the Howick kneelers

Helen Cooper came to our Branch Meeting at Seaton Hirst last Monday to speak about the Howick Kneelers. The talk with a slide show was very interesting and enjoyed by all the members.

Helen would be willing to go and give her talk to MU branches in the Diocese. Her contact details are in the MU Directory.

Sandra Davison



Ovingham Mothers' Union

Ovingham Mothers' Union regularly meet in St Mary the Virgin, Ovingham and this year on Mary Sumner Day hosted an event to raise funds for AFIA. Members from Hexham & Corbridge Deanery were invited and enjoyed a light lunch and raffle.

Margy Tasker-Brown, our President, spoke about some 'lesser-known facts' about Mary Sumner which was very interesting.

Canon David Goodacre talked about St Mary's which dates back to Saxon times and the afternoon ended with a short service led by Reverend Tom Birch, our present incumbent.

All in all, a very successful and enjoyable day and a total of £300 was raised for AFIA.

Margaret Davenport, Branch Leader Ovingham MU

Earsdon/Backworth

Anne Perry and her husband Jack celebrated their Blue Sapphire Wedding Anniversary (65 years) on the 21st June, 2023.

They received a letter of Congratulations from King Charles and as they had received a letter of Congratulations from the Queen on their Diamond Wedding (60th) I think you will agree that it is unique to have one from both King and Queen. They were thrilled to have letters from both!

Christine Birrell (contact)

Holy Nativity Fundraiser

Holy Nativity Chapel House branch held an afternoon tea on 31st July. We raised over £300 for Diocesan Funds and the Summer of Hope, and over 50 folk enjoyed a lovely tea and fellowship.

Jacqueline Rainford, Branch Leader



St Columba's MU meal out

Members and Friends of St Columba's Mothers Union enjoying a lovely meal together at the Melton Constable.

Joyce Elrod (branch contact)



A number of groups have sent me pictures of their meals and other social events, which are a wonderful way of getting to know each other better. This picture is representative of them all!

Editor

A different 90th Birthday party

Holy Nativity Chapel House heard about our York Gathering from our Chaplain Rev Anne Marr. They also had a small early 90th birthday party for Derek Marr.



St Mary's Mothers' Union's hundredth birthday!



St Mary the Virgin, Monkseaton branch of the Mothers' Union is 100 years old this year and we celebrated on Tuesday 17th October with a Service led by our Vicar, Revd Nigel Taylor.

This was followed by tea and cake. We had an excellent celebration cake made by our parish secretary, Sarah, which was cut by one of our branch members, Judith, who has been in the MU for 63 years. Thanks to Margy Tasker-Brown, Anne Blight and all who joined us to make it a most enjoyable afternoon.

Gillian Macdonald, Branch Leader

St John, Whorlton flower arranging

At our September meeting, our own member, Leslie Tait, led the group in flower arranging.

Anne Blight, Northumberland Archdeaconry Vice President



16 Days of activism against gender violence

...on 7th December the Cathedral Eucharist will be led by MU, hopefully with the Dean officiating. MU will have a 'No More 1 in 3' display in the Chapel of the Resurrection during these 16 days.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024

JANUARY

12th Trustees by Zoom 10 a.m.

FEBRUARY

1st Pay in Day at the Cathedral
10am-12 noon

24th Deadline for Spring Newsletter:
copy to Barbara Packer, please

MARCH

8th Trustees via Zoom 10am

22nd Diocesan AGM & Council
meeting at 6 for 6.30pm at
Kingston Park

MU leads Midday Prayers at 12.00 every first Thursday in St. George's Chapel
at the Cathedral

JUNE

8th Diocesan Festival, attended by
Bishop Helen Ann

24th-25th Retreat at Shepherds Dene
(see page 2)

• BIRTHDAYS • ANNIVERSARIES • DEATHS •

BIRTHDAYS

90th Derek Marr
Holy Nativity, Chapel House

80th Valerie Hawker
St Michael, Alnwick

80th Irene Thompson
St Michael, Alnwick, I.M.

80th Kay Downey
St Michael, Alnwick

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

**BLUE SAPPHIRE WEDDING
(65 years)**

Anne & Jack Perry
Earsdon & Backworth

DIAMOND WEDDING (60 years)

Janet & Rev Angus Palmer
St Oswin, Wylam

Ann & David Buckley
St Peter, Monkseaton

Lorna & Rob Beadle
Holy Sepulchre, Ashington

GOLDEN WEDDING (50 years)

Val & Gerald Pawsey
Delaval

Julie & Lawrence Lingham
Holy Sepulchre, Ashington

PEARL WEDDING (30 years)

Joanne & Derek Winn
Holy Sepulchre, Ashington

SILVER WEDDING (25 years)

Joan & Morris Mitchell
Delaval

DEATHS

Ruth Hallowell
Indoor Member in Morpeth
Deanery, aged 100

Sheila Horn
St Peter, Monkseaton,
recently Branch Leader

Brenda Mennear
St George, Cullercoats,
past Indoor Members' rep

Sonia Dowling
All Saints, Gosforth

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members, including:

Kay Downey St Michael, Alnwick

Anne Montgomery St Michael, Alnwick

Mothers' Union in Newcastle Diocese is a charity formed to serve families either in a family group or as individuals and walk with them by support through challenging times in their lives.

The charity is 100% volunteer led. All monies raised go into the many projects Mothers' Union develop and deliver.

If you would like to contribute to the work that Mothers' Union does both in Newcastle Diocese and Worldwide you can contribute to our Virgin Giving site:

www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1008779



Quiet corner - see page 13.

Do visit our growing website at
www.munewcastle.org.uk

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of Newcastle

CONTACT DETAILS

Address: Church House,
St Johns Terrace,
North Shields NE29 6HS

Website: www.munewcastle.org.uk

