

Autumn 2025

Mothers' UNION

in the Diocese of Sheffield
www.sheffieldmu.co.uk Reg Charity No. 1063619

newsline



A publication about Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Sheffield



Stronger Together

150th Anniversary



Jo-Anne, our President, writes...

Autumn is one of my favourite seasons, the warm colours of red, rust, orange and yellow mix with the evergreens.

The curtains pulled earlier this evening, and the heat a memory from a fabulous, long warm summer, raises a smile which seems to wane quickly, as has the weather the last two weeks. It is amazing how quickly we adapt to the heat of the sun and changes of summer and then cooler nights arrive and darker mornings really affect moods. I never look forward to taking down the hanging baskets, who's bright colours and splendour adorn the front garden – but colour gone, it's time to rest (till next year) as we enjoy the season of harvest, and mist and mellow fruitfulness. It is a time to reflect and celebrate the beauty and richness of Autumn, a God given theme of nature, time and the cycle of life.

I had to smile on my journey to work as schools return, noticing the children and young people in blazers that will soon fit! Hung on tiny frames, as their new beginnings unfold, new friendships formed, and the pattern of life continues.

You may be questioning where I am going with this!

This next year is of celebration, 150 years since Mary Sumners' vision took shape, and here we are planning events and activities that raise the profile of 'our' wonderful Mothers' Union. Throwing wide open the doors to new friendships and opportunities, to share together our joint story and journey. Offering invites to, 'Join us, Join in, "changing lives", and 'shining a light for future generations to come'. Built on the firm foundation of our former members leaving a legacy. I wonder what colour 2026 will be for us! I encourage you to join in, across the diocese, across the world, and help grow our membership, friendships and supportive partners. Ensuring this feeds us, rooted in our faith, as we prepare to step out and offer fellowship.

So, it's time to get excited, for many things like a bike ride from York Province to London, the Annual Gathering at the Emmanuel Centre and a service in St. Paul's Cathedral. Also, we shall follow the 'time capsule' as it plots a path through our diocese on its journey. Our challenge to raise 150 'new' members, and raise funds

through our many creative ways, our giant picnics and sponsored silence, musical entertainment – the list is endless and your thoughts matter to us. All this is wrapped in the normal seasonal flow of activity: Annual Christmas Tree Festival, Mary Sumner Day, Quiet Day, Vigil and Rise Up events to name but a few. Maybe you can help by bringing along a friend or family member to a branch meeting or event! A very warm welcome awaits!

Having toured and attended more than sixteen events since last writing, I can confirm this whole heartedly – I remain

I am sure, like me, you will look forward to reading this having enjoyed the Summer Newsline – the content of which never ceases to amaze! Compliments to the stories and pictures you share with our editorial team. It certainly illuminates the work we do in our projects and communities throughout all the seasons. We look to grow into the future, shaped and designed by you, with Mothers' Union at the heart of all we do! Thank You!

**My Blessings - I remain as always –
Jo-Anne**

It is a time to reflect and celebrate the beauty and richness of Autumn, a God given theme of nature, time and the cycle of life.

deeply touched by meeting so many members and friends, and we know only 25 % of churches have connection to Mothers' Union so there is a lot of scope for getting out there and trying something new like church based membership and raising the profile with our clergy and new informative clergy packs.



Archbishop of York,

Steven Cotterell's sermon

from the Mothers' Union
Provincial Service

“Jesus said, ‘Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’”

Matthew 20 26b-28

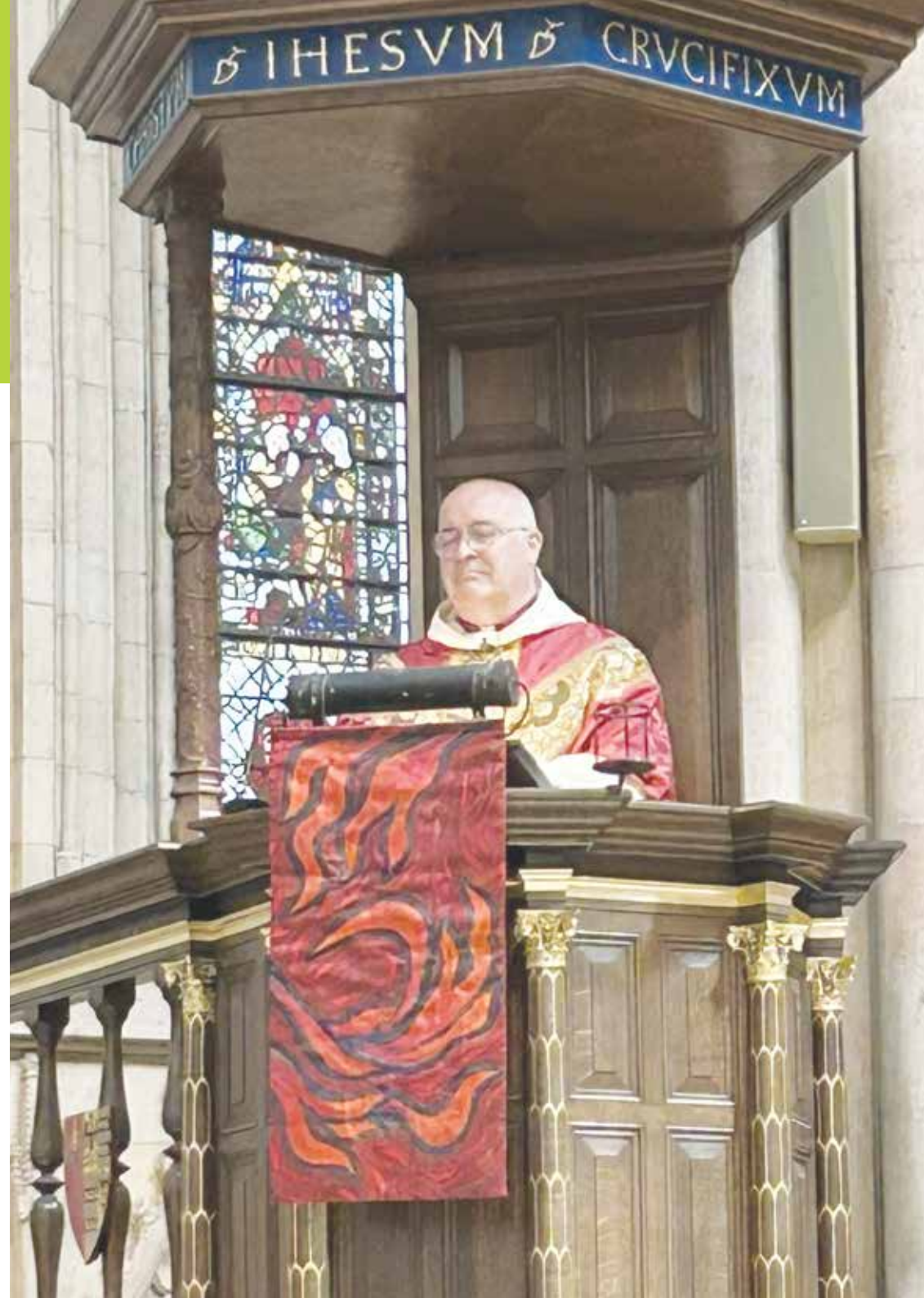
At a retreat during my curacy the Retreat Conductor set us the task of defining ministry. At the end of his address, we were sent off for an hour to reflect on our experience and come up with a one sentence definition. I can't remember what we were supposed to do with the sentence: probably something vaguely Celtic and cringingly relevant involving a pebble, some water and lots of candles. Anyway, I stomped off, not feeling terribly motivated about the task and genuinely unsure about what to say. My experience of ministry at that moment – I guess I had been ordained about two years – had been a jumble of joys and horrors. There was only one thing I was really sure of: my expensive training had not really prepared me that well for the brutal facts of ministry. Indeed, on a bad day it seemed like it had been carefully designed to conceal me from reality.

I knew a lot of New Testament Greek. I even had a passing knowledge of philosophy and the more advanced theories of group dynamics. But when

I sat with the parents whose child had died and saw the utter bewildering helplessness in their eyes, I didn't have anything to say. And when the boy I had met in church on Sunday morning turned up at my house on Sunday evening and asked me whether I could give him twenty quid so that he could buy some drugs, and if I didn't, he would just have to go and rob someone, I was equally lost.

I found myself constantly convulsed by the greatest joys and the most heart-rending sorrows, and I never felt I had the resources within myself to deal with them.

I'm not blaming my training. I enjoyed it enormously. And I also loved being a priest. But I found myself constantly convulsed by the greatest joys and the most heart-rending sorrows, and I never felt I had the resources within myself to deal with them. I either wasn't good



Archbishop of York, Steven Cotterell's sermon from the Mothers' Union Provincial Service (continued)

enough, or holy enough or quick-witted enough. At the same time, the boundaries just kept shifting and the demands increasing.

There were also so many things that I realised I would only learn by my mistakes. Like the time the confirmation group just didn't want to talk to each other. Or to me. Or to anyone! Their boredom convinced me. Or in the school – easy to hype the children up, not so easy to get them to come down again. The raised eyebrows of the teachers, into whose care I would return them after my fifteen minutes of frivolous havoc, said it all.

The call inside me was as strong as ever, the joys just about sufficient to carry me through the pain, but writing a definition? I just couldn't think how ministry could be summed up or tied down. All I knew was that I hadn't got it worked out. It was too complicated, too costly, too mysterious, and too beautiful. It wasn't the training that was the problem, it was me.

I wandered out of the building where we were meeting and headed down the road. It was drizzling. Around the corner was another church. The doors were open, so I went into shelter from the rain

I sat down in one of the pews and

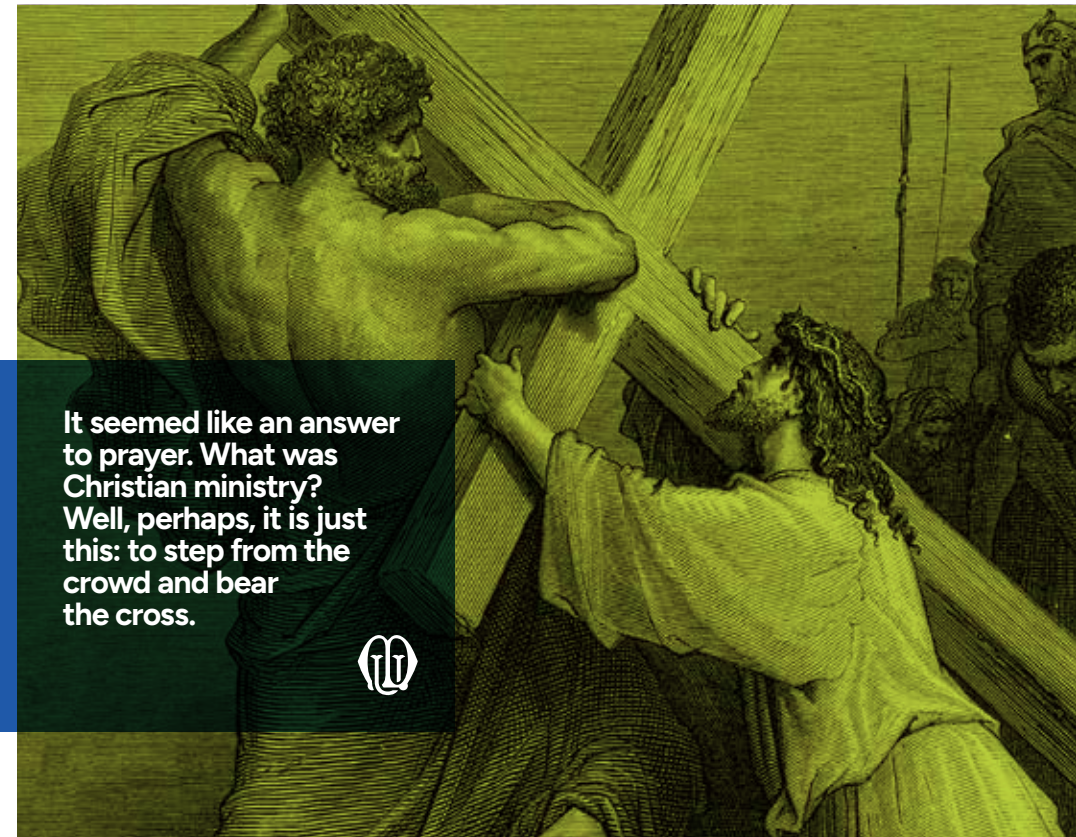
The call inside me was as strong as ever, the joys just about sufficient to carry me through the pain, but writing a definition? I just couldn't think how ministry could be summed up or tied down.

At an even deeper level, the shaky foundations of my prayers were starting to show. At the sort of Theological College I went to it was easy to think you were making progress in the spiritual life. After all there were three services a day. Two of them were compulsory, and the other was attended by virtually everyone, so I went too. It seemed like I was swimming. Actually, I was just being rushed along by the current.

In the parish it was harder. Sometimes I was on my own. And in those moments of alone-ness I found my spirituality was built on sand.

suddenly found myself feeling desperate and helpless. Everything I was doing just seemed like an act. I knew I wasn't the good and holy person some people supposed me to be. I felt like I was someone pretending to be a priest.

I think it was at this moment that I looked up. Around the walls of the church were the Stations of the Cross telling the story of the last hours of Jesus' earthly life, from his condemnation before Pilate to the placing of his body in the borrowed tomb. Right above me was the fifth Station, which depicts that episode in the story when the Romans Guards get someone else to help Jesus carry his cross. Beneath the picture



It seemed like an answer to prayer. What was Christian ministry? Well, perhaps, it is just this: to step from the crowd and bear the cross.



of a kindly and benign helper lifting the cross of Christ to his own shoulders, an inscription read: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross.

It seemed like an answer to prayer. What was Christian ministry? Well, perhaps, it is just this: to step from the crowd and bear the cross. It brought together my helplessness before the stranded passion of the bereaved parents and the confirmation class, the school assembly and the weekday Mass. In each situation I was called to bear the cross; or to be more accurate, hold before the world the cross of Jesus Christ so that people could see it

for themselves, and perhaps even glimpse in me, and in my actions and words, the saving power and the generous love of God.

I have among you as one who serves as Jesus, and this is how it must be with you. Not like the leaders of the world. You too, must be the servant of others

I suppose that was the day and that was the hour that I learned with my heart what I had been taught in my head: that ministry is not mine. That it belongs to God, and it belongs to everyone. That it is God working through his church, which is the Body of Christ on earth. All

Archbishop of York, Steven Cotterell's sermon from the Mothers' Union Provincial Service (continued)

of it summed up in that moment, by the image of Simon stepping out of the crowd, helping Jesus bear the weight of the cross.

Inspired, I then turned to look afresh at the scriptural accounts of this incident, and of course I was slightly thrown by what I found.

Mark describes it in this way –

“They compelled a passer-by who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross.” (Mark 15. 21a).

Matthew and Luke use the same language of pressure and compulsion. Luke even says that Simon is “seized” (Luke 23. 26).

This wasn't quite how the picture in the church conveyed it. Simon wasn't a volunteer. He was a recruit. And maybe a reluctant one. He didn't want to carry that cross at all. He did it because he was compelled, because saying no wasn't an option.

I was led deeper. Dare I look into those same dimensions of my own vocation? What is my real motivation? Is it to willingly suffer alongside Christ, to bear his love to the world, to lead and feed his people? Or am I just trying to save myself? How honest am I about my own deep reluctance to know Christ, to do his will, and to follow in his way?

My sober assessment of myself was this: I am both. I am a volunteer and a recruit; and utterly dependent on the Christ who's cross I so falteringly carry to purge me of those things whose driven self-centeredness slakes my own thirst only, and too easily ignores the suffering complexities of the world. Hardly a surprise really: this cross I carry; I need it just as much as everyone else.

And what is true for me and for my ministry, is surely true of the ministry of all the baptised and therefore of the amazing, courageous and fruitful ministry of the Mothers Union.

We're all volunteers and we're all recruits!

I give thanks for this ministry and pray for Christine in the new responsibility she takes on today as the Provincial President of the Mothers' Union here in the north and for John as Provincial Chaplain.

May you both know Christ's love for you and know that he ministers to you. Following in his way, do not emulate or pine for the leadership of the world. For it must not be so among us. We are called to service.

One last thing: in his account of the story, Mark adds the intriguing detail that Simon of Cyrene is “the father of Alexander and Rufus” (Mark 15. 21b) as if those hearing the account would know immediately who

We give thanks that the Mothers' Union here in this Province of York and across the world bears the cross of Christ and models in parish after parish and diocese after diocese true servanthood in ministry, particularly serving the needs of family life, of children and of the place of women within the church.

Ministry belongs to all of us. We are in this together.

We all have days when we yearn to serve the Lord and find great joy in that service, and there are days when we would gladly run 1,000,000 miles away from it.

But today we give thanks that the Mothers' Union here in this Province of York and across the world bears the cross of Christ and models in parish after parish and diocese after diocese true servanthood in ministry, particularly serving the needs of family life, of children and of the place of women within the church.

was being spoken about, as if to say, you know, 'so and so's Dad.'

For me, this brings the Bible to life. The people that Mark was writing to had a connection with this person, affirming that the whole work of the gospel is entrusted to the whole of God's Church, and that the Church is made up of ordinary men and women who make mistakes, get muddled and have mixed motives. It is the ministry of those who are known by name to God our loving Father.

Which also makes me think there must be a branch of the Mothers' Union in glory where with Mary the mother of Jesus, and girded with the towel of service, the lowly are lifted high and the proud cast down.



How we CONTINUE to fulfill our Mission in Sheffield Diocese and beyond

Away from it all

Of all the Projects Mothers' Union supports AFIA is the only one that has no other funding.

All the holidays we provide are funded entirely by the generosity and outreach from Sheffield MU members.

It is wonderful to report that as a result of our members fund raising events 10 families from Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Wath Deaneries were able to take advantage of our Away From It All Project.

In total 17 adults and 25 children went off for one week to a Haven Resort at Cleethorpes or Mablethorpe and were supplied with a food hamper by Deanery members. This year the weather was as kind to them as you are.

This year I had the added privilege of not only organising the holidays but being able to meet 3 of the families in the Rotherham

Deanery when I and a friend delivered food hampers to them. One gentleman even phoned me while on holiday to thank the Mothers' Union members for the best gift he and his daughter had ever had, in a wonderful caravan and resort. I pass his thanks on to all our members as you are the ones who made it possible. Thank you all so much on behalf of all the families.

**Kind regards
Angela (AFIA Rep)**



AFIA Feedback

The reaction when you deliver a hamper is just magical. The families are so grateful and very emotional. The children run around and peer into the hamper with wide eyes!! It really is a very special thing to be able to do!

One of the vicar's who sponsored a family to go on holiday was delighted and the family he sponsored had a wonderful time. It was the small boy's first introduction to the seaside and what an experience for him and his Mum!!!



Women's Refuges

All branches across the Diocese are very generous and continue to support our five Refuges. Rotherham and Barnsley Refuges have no storage, so MU branches respond to requests from these refuges.

St Catherine's MU provided a "Moving On" basket for a mother and her family at Sheffield Refuge.



St Oswald put together birthday treat bags for the ladies.



Tankersley and Wath members responded to a request for summer picnic gifts for the school holidays for Barnsley Refuge.



Bradfield MU donated household items for the Sheffield Refuges.



Barnby Dun provided summer treats bags for girls at the refuge and others in the community receiving support and items are donated almost monthly by members for Baby Basics and Women's Refuge.



Issy Mears (Prison Coordinator) writes about Sheffield Diocese

Mother's Union involvement on Prisons...

It was 1992 when a 'safe play area' was begun by Mothers' Union members in Moorlands Prison on visiting days.

The idea then was to give adults some private time together whilst the children were able to 'let off steam' in the play area. Many had travelled quite some distance in order to visit their relative and would be restless and hungry!

Next door to Moorlands stood Lindholme prison where the following year the Rainbow play area was opened in the same vein by more MU volunteers. Both were instigated by a very dedicated and persuasive lady, Sheila Osgerby. As you can imagine the lovely MU ladies were welcomed with open

arms, entertaining the children with toys, books and crafts, whilst Mum and Dad talked. Volunteers were in abundance, and both play areas thrived.

I became involved when Sheila came to talk to our Branch about twenty-five years ago. Happily, a number of Sprotbrough MU joined the volunteers group venturing, with a little trepidation, unknown territory. Once inside Lindholme Prison (a lower category than Moorlands) we soon found ourselves happily looking after the children within a castellated area. The prisoners themselves

had made this area with plenty of toys, crayons, books all generously given by MU members. Very soon a few of us were persuaded to join the volunteers in Moorlands prison with more heightened security. The play area there was in a dedicated enclosed area with tables and chairs suitable for little ones and donated toys and books, we also tried to cater for older children who may wander in too. We worked here alongside Humber Pre School Alliance based in Hull who were able to come more frequently than MU's once a week.

They eventually lost the funding they had had for their paid worker and MU continued to cover the one day a week. All the children looked forward to the Play Area after their journeys and would be eagerly waiting for the doors to open to enjoy the books, toys crafts or a one to one with a volunteer. As the number of visiting days increased so more involvement was needed. The charitable group, Prison Advice & Care Trust (PACT) was approached by Moorlands. Instead of the children and parents or visitors being isolated from each other the area was opened up and the children were encouraged to go out with games, pictures, to their relatives table therefore having more interaction and involvement.

Our volunteers were slowly dwindling and, sadly, after Covid we found we could no longer sustain our visits. Fortunately, PACT continues their invaluable work whilst Sheffield Diocese decided to move in a



different direction. Every prisoner would receive a Christmas card each year as part of our outreach, written by members. We have also involved members in making small knitted or material Christmas Tree Decorations which grace the tree in the visitors' area.

Members were so very generous and rose to the challenge with enthusiasm! Eleven hundred cards were written this last year and delivered at the beginning of December. Although sounding a daunting task there is never any problem finding willing members who will take cards to write, and it means such a great deal to the recipient. In January we received some wonderful letters from prisoners showing their appreciation.

We feel that God is working within us all to give them some comfort, hope and encouragement.



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Outreach at the Cathedral coffee mornings

Our July coffee morning was just that, as our
Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow, came to visit us.



Kathleen was welcomed by us all and she told us about her vision for Mothers' Union. She was accompanied by the **Provincial President, Christine Sharp**. They cut a cake and shared it with members as they chatted over coffee. Kathleen presented the **Rise Up awards** to branches. In the afternoon we showcased our work in Sheffield Diocese and presented Kathleen with a photo album entitled '**Love in Action**' in Sheffield Diocese Mothers' Union to take back to Canada. It was a lovely occasion and we are definitely 'Stronger Together'.



RISE UP against domestic abuse



Our Vigils will take place outside Doncaster Minster, Sheffield Cathedral and Harley Mission on Saturday 29th November 12.30- 1.30

Please support this so we can Raise Awareness of Gender-Based Violence.

Rotherham Families First

Families First's aim is to reduce poverty and deprivation to children and young people by the provision of basic items. Drop off: Parkgate Shopping Centre, Rotherham S60 1TG: Monday and Friday 9.30-12

Baby Basics

Baby Basics has branches all over the country.

Sheffield Baby Basics support vulnerable families by providing many of the essentials needed for life with a child 0-5yrs. Drop off: Albion House, Savile Street Sheffield: Monday- Thurs 10-2.30

Doncaster Baby Basics support vulnerable families across Doncaster by providing a Moses basket filled with items such as bedding, clothing, nappies, wipes, and a newborn soft toy as well as toiletries for mum. Drop off: Sprotbrough Methodist church : Wednesdays 10-12 (term time only)



Sheffield MU members support Baby Basics in Sheffield and in Doncaster



Request from Rotherham Families First

The Rotherham Christmas Toy Appeal is running again this year, giving the neediest children and young people in Rotherham a gift to open on Christmas morning.

Over 2000 children and young people benefitted from the appeal last year with the help from local businesses, churches, schools and members of the public. We are very lucky to have the backing from Parkgate Shopping Centre with the 'giving trees', The Advertiser and our local radio station Rotherham Radio.

at Parkgate Shopping Centre, purchase a gift and hand it into any shop there. These are collected by the elves on a regular basis. Hand a gift into any Rotherham library, who are again collecting for the appeal or do a collection as many churches in Rotherham do with their 'gift giving service'.

The cost of living, heating our homes and just generally living has taken its toll on Rotherham families, so we need your support more than ever.

We believe this year will be harder than ever for families, not just families on benefits but the families that are working just to keep their heads above water, they all need our support. The cost of living, heating our homes and just generally living has taken its toll on Rotherham families, so we need your support more than ever.

The appeal receives requests from professionals working closely with the families so they can identify Centre most in need.

We ask for limited information on the child or young person, first name, male or female, age, and if there is a desired gift. The gifts are bagged ready for the professional putting them forward who collect and give to the parent/carer to take ownership and to wrap and give to the child or young person on Christmas morning to open.

There are various ways you can help with the appeal, pick a tag off a Christmas tree

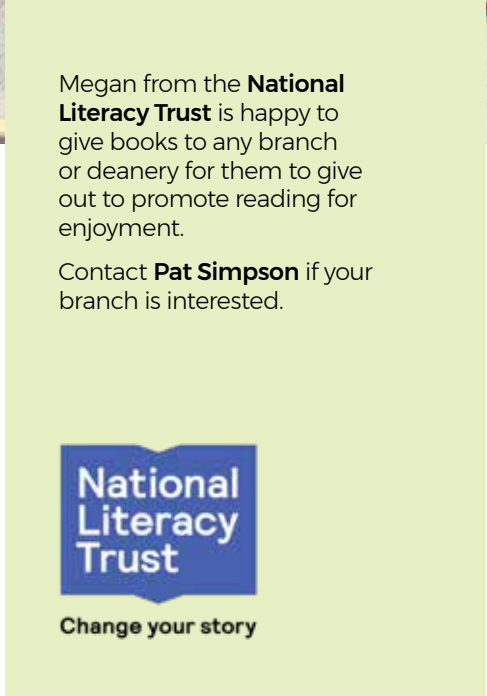
Each year we find that teenagers get forgotten about and yes, they are the hardest to purchase for but even smellies, make-up, chocolate and perhaps a voucher goes a long way to help each one get a gift to open on Christmas morning.

We are looking at starting early so the beginning of December would be a good time to start donating items to provide more time to sort and distribute.

Any help that can be offered would be greatly appreciated.



Read Aloud Project



Contact **Pat Simpson** if your branch is interested.



Change your story

Carver St Parish Nurses

CART (Christian African Relief Trust) contact **Margaret Vivian** if you have items to donate.

MU Live

They are engaging in a wide range of activities, both large and small, that are positively impacting the lives of many people in their communities.

We submit reports regularly to quantify our donations to the community.

Editor's note: I'm sure that we have impacted many more, but I can only input the information I am sent! Also 1 starting basket impacts 1 person as does 1 baby cardigan. I have no idea how many people benefit from a bag of towels.

Away from It All	52
Baby Basics (2)	119
CART	101
Clewer	6
Literacy Trust	100
Prison	1,100
Refuge(5)	222
Rotherham Families First	347

IMPC

We thank her for all her hard work- we will miss her.

Editor's note: If there is anyone who enjoys chatting to people and would like to know more about the role then please get in touch as we have a job description.



MU Worldwide Wave of Prayer

Our "Wave of Prayer" is a continuous expression of our commitment in prayer to each other.

It runs throughout the year so that the work and members of each and every area in which Mothers' Union is active is prayed for at some point. We include this in our Midday Prayers.

The Wave of Prayer for Sheffield Diocese was held from 20th to 22nd August, and each branch was allocated a time to pray. Our link dioceses are Central Zimbabwe, Lango in Uganda, Kebbi in Nigeria, Tamale in Ghana and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. We also pray for Bondo in Kenya linked to Sheffield diocese.

Continued prayer for our links is needed in the light of the desperate circumstances MU members have to endure. In Kebbi and Tamale there is the constant threat from extremists, in Zimbabwe there has been a long drought and food is scarce and very expensive. In the Solomon Islands they face rising sea levels. Gender based violence is an issue in all places.

Thank you for praying.

Editor's note: Prayer Diaries will be dropping through your letterbox in early December. Please put it in a safe place for 2026 and use it regularly- if for various reasons you don't wish to use it please pass it on to your BC so it can be given to a new member. Thanks.

Some **Wath All Saints** members met in the St James Rooms They included prayers, readings, poems and music, one of our members was on holiday in Barbados but joined in prayer during that time.



There were 22 members of **St Francis Bessacarr** who joined in the wave of prayer.



MU News

**Celebrating 150 years
of Mothers' Union**



Grow our movement – the membership challenge

We are inviting every diocese to welcome 150 Brand New Members in 2026.

That is 150 new voices, new hearts, and new hands, joining the movement in every part of Britain and Ireland. As Members (or Friends), they will be joining our wonderful movement for the first time.

It is time to reach out to new people and invite them to Join Us and Join In. Welcome them to meetings, events or to volunteer in MU projects and programmes. When they know what we do, they will join!

Grow our impact – the fundraising challenge

We are offering each diocese £150 in seed funding and challenging them to turn it into £1,500 or more by 31 December 2026!

It is time to get creative...from bake sales to bike rides, coffee mornings to concerts, supper clubs to sponsored prayer walks, your challenge, your way!

Every pound raised will go towards the 150th Anniversary Fund, supporting the life-changing work of Mothers' Union in Britain and Ireland and in the world's most vulnerable communities.

Be part of something truly powerful by helping to bring hope, healing, and dignity where it is most needed.

Next year Mothers' Union will celebrate its 150th Anniversary.

Put these dates below in your diary as a subgroup is overseeing the booking of tickets, transport and accommodation.

If members would like to go, please let your Deanery Leaders know.

- the MU National Celebratory Service at St Pauls' Cathedral on the evening of 10th June 2026.
- the MU Annual Gathering on 11th June 2026, at the Emmanuel Centre next door to Mary Sumner House

MU News

Provincial President, Christine Sharpe, was commissioned on Friday 25 July in York Minster by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York. Christine Sharpe was Diocesan President for Manchester. Along with Provincial Chaplain, Bishop John Thomson. Several members went along to represent Sheffield Diocese.



The Summer of Hope

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), conflict continues to uproot families and devastate communities. This summer, we have brought hope to families by raising money for the Summer Of Hope.

Maybe you planted your sunflower seeds in your garden, as a visible sign of your support and prayers.



Barnburgh MU members and friends held a Beetle Drive to raise funds for the Summer of Hope. It was good fun spent with friends and everyone enjoyed the evening with refreshments and a raffle and raised £150 altogether for The Summer of Hope.

Wath MU members, Gill & Geoff Fellows hosted a coffee morning – (Gill even baked!!)



Diocesan News

Wear Your Faith Fortnight

Sunday 26th October- Sunday 9th November.
Sheffield Diocese will be running this for the 4th year running,

Wearing a symbol of faith can remind us of our hope in Jesus as we go about our daily life and can help us to share that hope with those around us. Sheffield Diocese are encouraging people to find their own symbol of faith to wear and what better than your Mothers' Union badge! I Peter 3:15 tells us to 'always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason for the hope you have.'



#Join Us Join In, #shining a light for future generations to come



The Revd Leah Vasey-Saunders has been consecrated at York Minster today to serve as Bishop of Doncaster in the Diocese of Sheffield.



Leah was installed into Sheffield Diocese on Saturday 20 September. President Jo-Anne and Susan Cammack were there to welcome her.

Diocesan News

Our Chaplain's new appointment

On 28th August this year I was pleased to be licensed by Bishop Pete as Chaplain to the Shrewsbury Hospital.

On 28th August this year I was pleased to be licensed by Bishop Pete as Chaplain to the Shrewsbury Hospital. I hasten to add that this is located in Sheffield, not the town of Shrewsbury! The chaplaincy role is part-time, but it comes with a house on the site.

Until about five or six years ago I hadn't even heard of the Shrewsbury Hospital. The term "hospital" is used in the older context to mean almshouses. In 1616 Gilbert Talbot, the seventh Earl of Shrewsbury, left provision for the building of a hospital for "twentie poore persons". However, owing to a lack of funds and to the English Civil War, the hospital at Sheaf Bridge in the city centre was not built until 1672. Unfortunately, the site was prone to flooding and after some residents lost their lives, the hospital was relocated in 1823 to a site adjacent to the Cholera Monument and Norfolk Park. It is now highly unlikely to flood as it is perched on a ridge with magnificent views over the city. Transport links by tram and bus are good, so the residents can easily get into town or to Crystal Peaks!

There are 85 almshouses on site, mostly single occupancy, but some set aside for couples. Residents have to be over sixty years old, able to live independently and able to demonstrate financial need. The hospital has always had a chaplaincy and the Duke of Norfolk is committed to this continued pastoral provision.

The beautiful chapel is at the centre of the spiritual life of the Hospital and there are currently services there on Sundays and Wednesdays. Some of the residents are already affiliated to other churches, not all



are of the same denomination, and two of the residents are Buddhist. However, the chaplain is available for all residents if needed. Much of the role is based on building community and on providing pastoral and spiritual support.

The community centre is an excellent location for events. It is good that some of the residents are willing to use their talents. One is a singing teacher who holds a monthly acapella singing group. Another is a retired baker who is running sessions on baking bread, croissants, cakes and other goodies. There is a regular snooker group, a regular luncheon club, occasional afternoon teas and other events besides.

It is hard to believe that the Shrewsbury Hospital is so close to the city and just up the Steel Steps from Sheffield railway station. Usually only the tolling of the Town Hall clock or the lovely peals of the Cathedral bells are a reminder of the busy city below. The Shrewsbury Hospital is quite a hidden jewel and it is a lovely place to be.

Editor's note: Don't worry, Canon Richard Parker isn't leaving us - just adding another string to his bow!

Diocesan News



Mary Sumner Day Service at Sheffield Cathedral

We were delighted that so many branch members were able to join us at this important service. It was very uplifting experience.



Diocesan News

Observations from our Vice President

Someone suggested that I should write a piece about my stay in hospital; 4 this year! Well, 'people watching' became the norm and I have been in awe of the human capability to deal with every health issue that you can imagine.



Thinking of MULOA, how are your observation skills, do you notice that depressed person, or someone suffering loneliness, or someone grieving or in pain, someone with early onset dementia? I could go on.

As a student nurse aged 18 years, along with my fellow students, our Sister Tutor sent us, with notepad and pen, to Doncaster Railway Station to observe passengers and to report any ailments we saw. Well, someone limping was easy, as was someone out of breath, but there were lots of hidden complaints, which we had to guess! It was a wonderful exercise of looking beyond what we could see.

As an in-patient this year I have been interviewed by many doctors and nurses.

One such interview I remember was by a student doctor, a lovely young woman in her 3rd year of training. She said she felt very lucky to have me as a patient of interest to question, as some of her colleagues had been allocated unconscious patients, so this task would be all about observation without the questions. I'm not sure that I was a patient of interest, but I certainly shared wards with patients suffering with a variety of conditions.

There were sleepless nights, sharing a ward with 3 others, almost all 3

suffering confusion, fear and possibly dementia. With my nurse's hat on, (and when the nurses on duty were busy elsewhere), I tried to reassure my fellow patients and calm troubled waters.

Sleepless nights were the norm I'm afraid, but prayer and God's help gave us a few hours of respite.

There was shouting all night, calling out for loved ones, walking around the ward unsteadily; one lady insisted that I have her bedding because she thought I looked cold.

Diocesan News

We were nursed by an international team of nurses and health care workers. Some were very caring, some very professional and some just getting on with the job. This 'retired nurse' observed 'nursing care' on a different level, but I realised that I was 'old school' and nurses walking around with mobile phones to record our obs. and to communicate

with each other is a totally different world nowadays.

Nevertheless, as human beings I believe that 'hands on care' is vital. It reassures us and it shows that someone does care. We are not robots, and I hope that AI doesn't take over our health care.

A quote from 1 Peter 4:10 'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as

faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms'. I am still 'work in progress', but I am able to get out and about. Thank you for all your prayers and good wishes. They have been a comfort. I count my blessings every day.

**Love and God Bless,
Tanis VP Doncaster
Archdeaconry.**

2026 Subscriptions

These are due at the beginning of January and will be £32 for the year. (£25 will go to MSH), If you are a branch member, please pay your subs by cheque or cash to you Branch Treasurer in January.

If you pay tax and have not done so, please fill in a Gift Aid form available from your BC.

Sheffield Diocesan Members and Sheffield IMPC (Indoor members not belonging to a branch) can send a

cheque, payable to Sheffield Diocese MU, to Phill Jackson (Diocesan Treasurer) or pay by BACS to Sort Code: 08-92-99 Account Number 65989700 after January 1st, 2026.



Deaneries & Branches

Abbeydale, St. Johns

Abbeydale, St. Johns branch held an afternoon tea for A.F.I.A. in July.

Fellowship and Friendship was enjoyed by members and friends with a pleasing result due to everyone's generosity.



Bessacarr St Francis

Bessacarr St Francis welcomed new members.



Deaneries & Branches

Bradfield MU

Bradfield MU were delighted to hear about the work of Parish Nurses from Louise Smith at their branch meeting. They are such a blessing to all who come into contact with them particularly in Sheffield Market Hall.



Bramley St Francis

Anne Walker, our branch organiser, with our guest speaker at the June meeting, Rev Dr Andrew Fox.

Andrew is the Minister of Wickersley Methodist Church and was the Methodist Minister in Lerwick, Shetland for seven years. He showed us slides of Shetland and talked about his time as minister.

Andrew's talk was so interesting he has agreed to return to a future meeting as his talk was a snapshot of his time in Shetland.



Deaneries & Branches

DASH Deanery Coffee Morning



On Friday 27th June DASH Deanery held a Coffee Morning in Doncaster Minster to raise funds for IMPC members. It was very well attended and there was a lovely happy atmosphere. As friends and guests entered the Minster they were met with a stall of lovely reading books, which were given to everyone for their children or grandchildren.

These books were given to the MU by the National Literacy Trust and Megan is happy to give books to any branch or Deanery for them to give out to promote reading for enjoyment.



As guests moved into the Minster there was a very generous raffle. Prizes were given by all branches. There was a plant stall provided by a friend of the Minster, beautiful knitted items, crafts and cakes galore, all made by our members. Moving on was the Tea Point where delicious cakes and hot drinks were served. It was a super occasion, and everyone enjoyed meeting, chatting and spending!!!

A grand total of £500 was raised. Thank you to everyone who took part in organising and serving and all visitors.



THE NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST gives children the tools to get the most out of life, and the power to shape their future.



Deaneries & Branches

DASH Deanery Sponsored Silence

Wednesday 27th August witnessed a very unusual event in Doncaster Minster!!!!

Instead of their usual busy chatter about the wonderful MU organisation, members of DASH Deanery were sitting in the Forman Chapel in absolute silence!!!

From 10.30am until 2.30pm 9 members sat round a table doing all sorts of activities.... reading, praying, knitting and sewing for MU Projects, jigsaws and thinking!!!!

They were doing a Sponsored Silence for AFIA along with many other members in their own homes. They were free to walk around the beautiful Minster and to help themselves to tea and coffee BUT not a word was spoken for 4 hours!! There were display boards explaining to all visitors what the money was going to be used for and lovely pictures of families on caravan holidays. A timer rang out at 2.30pm and members were delighted to have achieved their aim!!! 4 long hours of silence!!!



Well done to everyone who joined in at the Minster and in their own homes. We hope to raise over £2000 for next year's AFIA holidays, also a huge THANK YOU to everyone who sponsored this event.

Editor's Note, What about a Sponsored Silence throughout the Diocese next year for MU Projects in 2027?

Oughtibridge

Oughtibridge MU have been busy this summer.

In July was the strawberry tea, raising funds for MU projects.

Members responded generously to the request for items to fill the AFIA hamper for a family in Sheffield.

Beautiful knitted blankets were brought by one member for Baby Basics.

In August members shared readings or spoke about an item of interest. Then Beryl Hanson was presented with a wonderful bouquet for her 90th birthday.

Everyone was presented with a box of Smarties with a prayer suggestion for each colour. The boxes will be returned with money for MU in Burundi, the third poorest nation in the world.

Deaneries & Branches

Hexthorpe St Jude

Hexthorpe's 4 MU members celebrated Enid Punter's 99th birthday on 5 September with a cake and candles! Enid has been a member for 71 years! Enid has already said she is having a big party when she is 100, she tells everyone her auntie was 102 when she died and she says she is not beating me. Such positive attitude!



Millhouses St Oswalds

Millhouses St Oswalds had members with 107 years' service between the 3 of them.



Ryecroft MU

Jean Goodall from Ryecroft MU writes...

On Monday morning, 28th July, a small number of MU members and supporters from St. Nicolas Church, Ryecroft, travelled to Denaby to look around the Miners Memorial Chapel. Dawn, a member of All Saints Denaby, gave us a tour of the Church building which incorporated the Miners Chapel and which served as a reminder of the importance of mining in general. Apparently, there were 2 pits - Denaby and Cadeby Main - one at each end of the village. After the closure of Cadeby in 1986 (Denaby in 1968), the Parochial Church Council decided it should honour all miners, especially those from the local collieries, and to build a Miners Chapel as a memorial.

After pit closures, several items were retrieved from underground and are now on display. One eye-catching item was the large block (one ton of coal), which is now encased in glass and serves as the Holy Table.

Dawn spoke of a very different life over a decade previously in the Denaby area. Miners and their families lived in back-to-back houses, a toilet across the yard and a tin bath, secured by a nail on the wall, outside the door.

Local businesses became involved in supporting the project and further items were donated to the Chapel, which will be displayed on the forthcoming Heritage Day, which is currently being planned.

Deaneries & Branches

The morning was really very enlightening and even though the mining industry is long gone, the Miners Chapel at Denaby will be a constant reminder to younger generations of how mining was very important to our country.

After enjoying our cuppa and bacon sandwich in their very well-run community café, we said farewell and thank you.

Grateful thanks to Dawn for her very excellent rendition of how the memorial Chapel came into existence.



Tankersley Deanery



Tankersley Deanery MU enjoyed their annual summer afternoon tea followed by worship at St Peter's Church, Tankersley.

Deaneries & Branches

Tickhill

Tickhill MU held a Tea Party in July to raise funds for AFIA. We had a lovely afternoon, attended by members and friends including our Diocesan President Jo-Anne Van Levesley and her husband Stephen. We are absolutely delighted to report that we raised £785.



Poem from Tickhill Cream Tea written by Elaine Millard

*I penned these verses before
I came*

*Because I knew what I was
going to say
It was a foregone conclusion
That we would have a lovely
day*

*And we have, so thanks to
you our committee*

*For your hard work and for
such a worthy cause*

*So, members and friends
put your hands together*

*To show our real
appreciation, in applause!*



Chaplain Richard Parker visited Tickhill MU to speak about Parish Nursing UK. After starting off with prayers and notices he gave his talk and then we had drinks and tucked into cake.



Deaneries & Branches

Wath All Saints

Tools with a Mission is a Christian charity that collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them, sorts them into trade tool kits and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation.

When they visited Wath MU they left with in excess of 100 items garden and DIY tools.



Editor's Note:
Wath All Saints started Tiddler and Toddlers as part of the 125th Celebrations. They invited Baptism families to come along to a party and out of this T&T grew!



Wath MU held an Afternoon Tea in aid of MU projects.

Our last Tiddlers and Toddlers before Sept ended with our Tiddler and Toddler Praise as we listened to the story of the feeding of the five thousand. We shared a picnic together, made picnic baskets and real bread and said goodbye to some of our much-loved little ones as they move onto big school. We will miss you.





Join Us Join In

Welcome to New Members

Anita Cross	Wath All Saints
Veronika Corton	Bramley St Francis
Miriam Dotse	Bramley St Francis
Muriel Farley	Bessacarr St Francis (transferred from Cantley)
Irene Garland	Wath All Saints
Pauline Guest	Bessacarr St Francis
Carol Handrahan	Wath All Saints
Barbara Homar	Bessacarr St Francis
Geraldine Kaill	Bessacarr St Francis
Cherry Kipling	Bramley St Francis
Sue McIntyre	Bessacarr St Francis
Syd Williams	Sheffield IMPC



Congratulations

to the members celebrating their 90th Birthday

Beryl Hanson	13 August
Oughtibridge, Church of the Ascension	
Barbara Sowerby	31 August
Warmsworth, St Peter	
Betty Salter	31 August
Barnby Dun, St Peter & St Paul	
Anne Diver	28 September
Millhouses, St Oswalds	
Margaret King	8 October
Diocesan Member	

Long Service Awards	
Margaret McWilliams	47 yrs
Doreen Gill	46 yrs
Margaret Jackson	40 yrs
Cath Marshall	40 yrs
Pat Simpson	40 yrs
Pauline Leach	38 yrs
Anne Brown	35 yrs
Joan Wragg	25 yrs
Michael Jackson	20 yrs
John Simpson	20 yrs
Christine Davies	10 yrs
Pauline Moore	



Regrets and Blessings

Olive McDonoghue died peacefully on 26 July at her care home in Cheltenham where she moved to be near her family several years ago. Olive continued to be a Sheffield IMPC member until last year when her memory deteriorated. She is pictured in the photo taken 3 weeks before she died - an intergenerational art event at the home. Mum thoroughly enjoyed it and it's a rare 4 generation photo - one to cherish! With her daughter, grandson and great granddaughters.



Anniversary Congratulations

Gordon and Lesley Harpham celebrated 60 years of marriage on September 11th with flowers from Mothers' Union.

Lesley writes...Thank you to you all for the beautiful flowers and your best wishes on our very special day. We have had a lovely day in Epworth and feel thoroughly spoilt. It meant a lot to us both.

Regrets and Blessings

It is with great sadness that I share the news of Doreen Killey's passing on 27th July

She had been housebound for some time, but she was always a pleasure to visit.

Her local MU and Church family visited her right up until the end and are now supporting her family.

I am sure many of you will have fond memories of Doreen, always a smile on her face and a reassuring hug.

The first entry in the Thurgoland branch records I have found for her is Tuesday 2nd April 1996, a service of Holy Communion lead by Reverend Keith Hale

She became branch leader in March 2001 and served until 2007



Written on the back of this photo it says "Thurgoland MU August 2004 with WW President Trish Heywood"

The Annual report for 2007 states we have had another busy year with members being active within the Deanery and the Diocese as well as in our own community.

Pat Levitt and Doreen Killey are instrumental in working with and supporting other branches of Mothers' Union. Both ladies were a force to be reckoned with!

Jacqueline Robinson died peacefully on Monday 14th July. She was a very devoted church and MU Branch member who had worked extremely hard for St Nicolas Church, Ryecroft and generously supported

all the Branch fundraising it was involved in. She was a member for many years, and her passing will be of great sadness to all who knew her. A floral tribute was placed in church to acknowledge this.



Dates for your diary

OCTOBER	
Tuesday 21st	Tankersley Deanery Autumn Social followed by Compline, 7pm Worsborough St Mary.
Sunday 26th - Sunday 9th Nov	'Wear Your Faith Fortnight.'
Thursday 30th	Autumn Council: Bramley 6pm.
NOVEMBER	
Friday 7th	Cathedral Coffee Morning, 10.15 - 12noon. Hosts: Ecclesfield Deanery followed by F&C/A&O Feedback, 1pm.
Thursday 27th	Trustees: Sheffield Cathedral, 10am.
Thursday 27th	Wath Deanery Advent Service, Wath All Saints 1.30pm.
Saturday 29th	Rise UP Vigil Doncaster Minster, Harley Mission, Sheffield Cathedral. 12.45 - 1.45.
DECEMBER	
Tuesday 2nd - Sunday 11th Jan	Sheffield Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival.
Thursday 4th	DASH Deanery Advent Service, Doncaster Minster, 2pm.
Friday 5th	Cathedral Coffee Morning, 10.15-12noon. Hosts: Trustees.
Tuesday 9th	Ecclesfield Advent Service, St Savior High Green, 2.15pm.
Wednesday 10th	Tankersley Deanery Advent Worship, Penistone St John 2pm.
JANUARY	
Friday 2nd	Cathedral Coffee Morning, 10.15-12noon. Hosts: Ecclesall & Attercliffe Deanery.
FEBRUARY	
Friday 6th	Cathedral Coffee Morning, 10.15-12noon. Hosts: Wath Deanery.
MARCH	
Friday 5th	Cathedral Coffee Morning 10.15-12noon. Hosts: R&L Deanery.
Sunday 22nd - Sunday 29th	Time Capsule in Sheffield Diocese.
APRIL	
Friday 6th	Cathedral Coffee Morning, 10.15 - 12noon. Hosts: Tankersley Deanery.

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and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

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Elizabeth Dean, Pat Simpson, Gill Fellows and
Janet Howarth.

Editor's Note:

Please can all photos be in 'jpg' and would
you send them as attachments.

Please submit contributions for the Spring
Newsline by February 17th to Elizabeth,
newsline@sheffieldmu.co.uk or send to 177
Allerburn Lea, Alnwick NE66 2QR Please also
send dates, items and photos for website.

**Useful websites**

Sheffield Mothers' Union – Our own website

www.sheffieldmu.co.uk

Mothers' Union – Everything about Mothers' Union

www.mothersunion.org

MUeShop – Quote **Sheffield** when ordering

www.mueshop.org

Sheffield Diocese – Find out what is happening locally

www.sheffield.anglican.org

Editor's note:

The opinion expressed in each article is the opinion of its author and does not
necessarily reflect the opinion of Sheffield Diocese MU.