

LINK UP – Special Edition

Spring 2020

Building Hope and Confidence

Letter from Jane Hill, Diocesan President

What strange and unprecedented times we are living in. I hope that you and your families are staying well and are coping with the current (as I write) “lockdown”.

For all of us there are significant challenges and difficulties, but I trust that you have also experienced some wonderful God-moments, and blessings during the time of social isolation and staying at home.

Let me share some of my experiences. My first disappointment was that I was unable to visit my son and his wife in the USA. Sad, yes, but technology allows us to chat regularly and see each other on screen – what a blessing that is.

I hope that you have been able to make more use of technology – WhatsApp, Facetime, Zoom etc. to keep in touch with friends and family. I have found myself phoning people, including family members, much more regularly, and enjoying a chat whilst sitting with my coffee, or glass of wine, at home. What a blessing the telephone is!

We're sorry that events and activities have been cancelled – Lady Day service, branch meetings, Members' Evening, social gatherings etc. We were busy planning for Thy Kingdom Come service at Coventry Cathedral, but that, too has been cancelled. However, Catherine at Mary Sumner House is preparing resources, which we will be able to use at home, and we are hoping that Bishop Emma, our new Central Chaplain will use technology to speak to us – a way of uniting MU members not only in the UK, but around the world.

I am missing meeting up with my church family each Sunday and on occasions during the week. However, I'm listening to services on the radio, watching “Songs of Praise” and following the live streaming of weekly services and daily prayers which my church is producing. You may also be following the central MU Facebook page, with Rachael from MSH leading mid-day prayers each day – a wonderful way to feel connected to MU members everywhere, every day.

So, with all this extra time on my hands, how productive have I been? Well, I'd like to say that I've spring-cleaned my house, my windows are sparkling, all my clutter is gone, and my garden is looking stunning. However, I can't say that I'm using my time in those ways at all! Maybe I will in the next couple of weeks.

Despite the challenges, it's good to look, listen and find God in the moments of darkness and anxiety. We read God's reassurances in the Bible and it's good to reflect on those verses in our current situation:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord. “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you.” Jeremiah 29:11-12

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

With love and prayers for you all,

Jane

Branch News

Christmas Stockings from Wellesbourne

The stockings are filled with items that all the family can use, they are blessed in church on Advent Sunday and then taken to our local food bank where they are distributed to families in need in the Wellesbourne, Kineton and Stratford Area *Veronica Quinn*



St Nicholas Kenilworth Branch collected toiletries in February at the Communion Service which were taken to the Lighthouse shop in Leamington *Margaret Rogers*



Audrey and Daphne, helping to set the stall at St Andrews Christmas Fair Shottery on 23rd November, a Happy and Successful Event *Photo: Clodagh Mallison*

A Hat with a Story - Southam MU



The February MU meeting took place in the home of our Treasurer/Secretary Annie Lane. After a short meditation led by Chris Cooke, the theme of the meeting was "A Hat with a Story". Members had been invited to bring along a hat or photograph of them wearing a hat and share the story behind it. Some stories evoked painful memories, some were of childhood experiences, others of very proud, significant moments in members lives. There was laughter and tears, but each story formed part of the members life journeys. Annie summed up the accounts shared with a poem that she had written. Afternoon tea was served, and everyone agreed that it was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon

Heather Shackleton

Wellesbourne Branch



Mothers Union had a very successful day at the Church Christmas Fayre, where a range of items were sold including cakes, homemade jams and marmalades and a lovely selection of craft items, the sales generated some funds which we gave to the church.

Veronica Quinn

Onley Prison

Thank you to everyone who provided presents for the children at the Christmas family days.

They were very much appreciated and so good for the dads to be able to share the children's excitement.

I went into the visits centre where families book in on Christmas Eve and gave out the remaining presents to the children visiting their dads.

Thank you. Lynda Howells x

Arabian Bites

On 1st October, St John's Kenilworth hosted an evening with Arabian Bites, a restaurant staffed by newly arrived refugees from Syria and Iraq who are being supported to learn new skills and share their culture. Arabian Bites is a social enterprise and all proceeds go back into the project to help the settlement and integration of newly arrived refugees.

To find out more, or to host your own event, go to www.arabianbites.org/



News from our Link Diocese of Aba in Nigeria

Sent in by our Links Correspondent, Ogechi Ngemegwai

Top left: Aba Widows' Conference, where food items were shared among indigent widows



Bottom right: MU President Ihuoma Ugwuozor handing over a cash donation of N80,000 to a widow for economic empowerment under the Samaritan Purse Scheme

Bottom left: MU Diocese of Aba's stand during the Provincial Marketing Unit AGM



Birthdays and Celebrations

Special Birthdays

Jean Bunce 80 (St Nicholas Kenilworth)
Avril Smith 80(St Nicholas Kenilworth)
Nan Bragg 90(St Nicholas Kenilworth)
Gill Rose 90 (St John's Kenilworth)
Dot Tedds 90 (Exhall)
Jean Whidbourne(St Nicholas Kenilworth)
Audrey Barnby 92(St Nicholas Kenilworth)
Betty Paley 92(St Nicholas Kenilworth)
Mavis Pearson92 (St Nicholas Kenilworth)
Jane Bardell 98 (Shottery)

Vera Hawkins 100 (Shottery)

Dorothy Unitt 104 (Shottery)

Indoor Members' Birthdays

Vera Tilley 90
Ann Goulbourne 91 (Kinwarton)
Joyce Kennett 91 (Stoke St Michael)
Dorothy Rawlings 95
Phyllis King 97 (Southam)
Ann Charnley 100

Wedding Anniversaries

Golden

- ♥ Chris and Dave Cooke (Southam)
- ♥ Sandra and Graham Guden (New Bilton)
- ♥ Brian and Margaret Rogers (St Nicholas Kenilworth)
- ♥ Beryl and Alan Sperring (Whitnash)

Diamond

- ♥ Margaret and John Johnston (Whitnash)



Brenda Moss, along with her family, MU and church family recently celebrated her 90th birthday in some style with a family weekend outing, a shared lunch in church, 'open house', and finally at our October meeting we listened to a 'Desert Island Disc' recording of Brenda and her son, Philip (who happens to work for the BBC) reminiscing on her fulfilled life. The item Brenda would choose to take to her island was a constant supply of Dubonnet! Of course, there was a cake. *Beryl Douglas, Mancetter*



Dot Tedds celebrated her 90th birthday on 28th February. A lovely party was arranged for her by members of the Church – mostly MU

Words Cynthia Cogley, Photo Viv Hopkins

More Long Serving Members

At the Advent Carol Service, Jane Hill presented certificates to Eileen Jaynes, Nancy Bradley and Wendy O'Brien

Photo: Felicity Hawke



Joan Potts (St John's Kenilworth) has been a member for 50 years. When meetings restart, she will receive her certificate along with other certificates due in the branch

Welcome to New Members

Nuneaton Deanery celebrated the Community of the Cross of Nails at their festival service at Holy Trinity, Hartshill, in September. We were also delighted to welcome new members Debbie and Sheila to Mothers' Union
L-R: Sheila Middleton-Reid, Jane Hill, Debbie Kulik



Photo: Felicity Hawke

At the Advent Carol Service Sam Talbot from Southam (in white jumper) and Valerie Dawson from St Nicholas Kenilworth (in red coat) were enrolled.



Photo: Yvonne Knowles

MOTHERS' UNION EMERGENCY PRAYER CIRCLE

For a number of years now there has been a Mothers' Union Emergency Prayer Circle (EPC). A while ago we printed in this magazine the contact details to either phone or email your request to. At the moment we don't seem to be receiving many requests, so I am going to give the contact details out again below.

We have a number of 'circles' where I can honestly say true Praying Warriors faithfully pray through the requests sent to them. Their prayers and support of this EPC is wonderful and I have some lovely conversations with the main contact of each Circle such caring ladies who as well as praying, take to heart the person and their situation.

Confidentiality is paramount so only a Christian name is required and the need or situation of prayer request.

I would like to encourage all members to promote this EPC, to be active in each branch so that prayer is happening in these Circles a bit like 'cogs in a wheel' separate circles moving together in prayer can move to wonders of God's work through us all.

If you would like to form a circleto be the first contact who sends to the next person and so on this can be by email or phone.....please use the my contact details below.

Once again thank you to all who are already members of this EPC your support and prayers are much appreciated by those who are being prayed for who often comment that they feel 'soaked in prayer' which is a lovely place to be in times of need.

Contact Ann telephone 07704700119.....Email annmerielgibbons@gmail.com

Ann Gibbons (Trustee)

Advent Carol Service

The Advent Carol Service in 2019 was held at All Saints Emscote by invitation of Revd Diane Thompson. Although there is no branch there, Diane is an MU member, and was previously a Vice-President in Birmingham Diocese before her ordination.

The service included songs sung by the local Church of England Primary School, an enrolment and presentation of long service certificates, and the gifts for Onley Prison were collected at the altar.

News from the Diocesan Members' Correspondent

Before coronavirus changed our lives, another Bring & Share Lunch was arranged, this time at St James, Styvechale CV3 5BTA on Saturday 25th July. I am reluctant to cancel it at this stage, but if that becomes necessary, I will let all of you know either by e-mail or by post. It will be so good to be able to get together again after this enforced separation.

The planned Arabian Bites evening at St Nicholas, Warwick on 19th May, has been postponed until next year.

Is your church managing to provide support, I wonder? I pray you know the love and care of our Lord Jesus, and are finding consolation in the Psalms, which in turn energises our witness (even through the window) in our communities, where many people are anxious and fearful.

Val Brant

Diocesan Members' correspondent

From Revd Pam Gould, our Diocesan Chaplain

As I am writing this, we are approaching what must be the strangest Holy Week we have ever encountered.

No Palm Sunday procession, no donkeys, no Palm Crosses to hold up for blessing, no listening together to the story we know so well. I do hope that by now you have found a way to worship together in the new ways that technology has made possible. If that is beyond your capability, BBC 1 is providing services on Sunday mornings which I have found to be a joy and inspiration.

Of course, many of us will undoubtedly feel the great pang of loss on Easter morning, when, maybe for the first time for many, many years, we are prevented from receiving Communion in the churches so very precious to us. Maybe this very loss may help us to enter more deeply into the loss experienced by those who loved Jesus so much and could find no comfort in that darkest of times, just emptiness and pain.

Maybe too, we might experience more of the fear, and wonderment, experienced by first Mary and the other women, and then the disciples on that first Easter morning when darkness gave way to dawn, and finally the light of day., when finally, they dared to believe the tomb was empty, he was indeed risen, death was overcome. At our church, possibly the most special act of worship of the year is the Easter Vigil, where in a dark church, the priest carries forward a lighted candle, singing "The light of Christ", to which the congregation respond "Thanks be to God," and slowly lighted candles, specks of light, appear around the church.

Let's pray that the light of Christ may shine throughout our neighbourhoods, our nation and our world at this darkest of times., as we respond together, aware of acts of selflessness, and sacrifice, and neighbourliness, "Thanks be to God!"

God bless you all, this holy week and Easter, and beyond.- - and, as a small gift to you for this week, you will find on our website mothersunion.com and our Facebook page, a reflection for Palm Sunday, composed by our Reader, Wendy, and a meditation which I composed for a Quiet Day a few years ago. I wondered whether this might be something for you to read quietly, and reflect on, during the coming days

With love from Pam

RIP

Gwen Briscoe (St Nicholas, Kenilworth)
Maureen Melson (Diocesan Member)
Max Roberts (St John's Kenilworth)
Margaret Sibley (Exhall)
Marjorie Sims (Rugby Diocesan Member)

What are you doing while you are stuck at home?

- Southam members are making bags for toiletries for the Haven and for Foodbank
- Or you could get ahead hats for shoeboxes!

