

Peculiar Times!

Greetings! from the Mothers' Union Diocesan Trustees and Officers

Message from Worldwide President Sheran Harper

'This summer we give thanks to God for the gift of life and for our loving and compassionate families and friends.

We owe our unique role for women within the Church to our founder Mary Sumner. This year we celebrate 145 years of Mothers' Union and pay tribute to Mary Sumner on the 100th anniversary of her death for all she achieved in life, empowering women and mothers worldwide, and establishing the home as a place of religious education and growth'.

July 6th 2pm Garden Party at Bishops House. There are still places available for this event. In order to make this a COVID safe event, everyone attending will be bringing their own refreshments. Please contact Beryl Mee to book your place.

Mary Sumner Day Service

A special service to commemorate 100 years since the death of Mary Sumner is to be held in the Cathedral on August 9th at 11.30am. As yet we do not know what social distancing restrictions will be in place. More information will be circulated nearer the time but put this date in your diary today.

Summer of Hope Appeal

Despite all the challenges that social distancing present for any fund-raising event, MU branches across the diocese are planning different ways to support the Mothers' Union Summer of Hope appeal. Virtual coffee mornings and afternoon teas are very popular. At least one branch is taking on the MU on the Move challenge. They plan to walk 100 kilometres during the first week in August. That is 5k for each member. Some may walk 1k each day, others are walking 5k every day, as several members are housebound, to ensure the branch meets its 100k target.

Supporting and promoting marriage is one of the Mothers' Union core objectives. This year, in our diocese, we are collecting contributions from our members using the five wedding vows as the five-chapter headings for our latest paperback and eBook 'For Better, For Worse'. The chapters 'In sickness and in health' and 'Till death us do part' understandably have not received as many contributions as the other chapters. But these are important vows and those coming to marriage would benefit from our experience.

Our Mothers' Union chaplain Revd. Ian Wilson was pleased to hear of this project and felt that the clergy would be most interested in using this book with couples, as part of marriage preparation. Bishop Mike will bless this project as the book/ eBook is launched at our Healing Service in October.

Ipswich Area News Hadleigh Branch are collecting Craft items for The Woman's Refuge and several branches are holding small meetings, weather permitting, in gardens as well as Zoom meetings and sending letters out to members who are unable to join a Zoom meeting. **St Mary Stoke** are hoping to have their July meeting outside which will be the Wave of Prayer weather permitting.

North Suffolk Area news

The first face to face meetings in **Fressingfield** took place by getting together in groups of no more than six, in four different gardens. The meetings began with a short service to give thanks that we could be together again and to reflect on this year's theme of rebuilding hope and confidence. Following the service, members enjoyed tea and scones, cakes etc and plenty of time to chat and catch up. Restrictions permitting, the branch intends to meet as a full group at the start of July, either outside or in groups within the church hall.

Sudbury Area news: St Mary's, Newmarket, Zoom meetings therefore have been impossible! The diocesan MU newsletters were delivered by hand to all the members, together with a branch newsletter, handwritten with all the news from our branch. Over the past 18 months, several of our members have had 'big' birthdays (including our branch leader Daphne!) but because of COVID it has not been possible for them to celebrate. So, along with the newsletters little pieces of paper were sent to each member to write a message for the person whose birthday it was and then a card was made for that member. We have also kept in touch by telephone.



We are holding our first committee meeting in Daphne's garden in July and then hoping to have a full meeting in September.



The **Cathedral** branch raised £950 with their very successful Strawberry Fair. They have started to meet in gardens and have a Summer Outing to Chippenham Park arranged for August 17th, with members making their own way to Chippenham Park.

Clare and Cavendish branch met by zoom in February, March and April. They were able to welcome their new vicar Rev Mark Woodrow to the February meeting; he had been inducted just the evening before. Members have been knitting as usual. A bag of hats for Seafarers is ready to take to Ipswich. May and June meetings took place on branch leader Janice Brett's south facing patio. They are all looking forward to more normal services. They are also in touch with our local friends by phone.

The Wave of Prayer involves every MU member. Every diocese has been allocated three days when they are at the crest of the **Wave of Prayer** and have their special Wave of Prayer services. The days for St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and our link dioceses of Byumba, Jalingo, Lake Malawi and Lucknow, are July 16th – 19th. Branch leaders will be sent the service which is also to be posted on our website. Diocesan members will have their service sheet sent out by Sue Norrington, Diocesan Members Trustee

Summer of Hope Prayer:

God of hope, shine the rays of your love on all in need across the world,
That this may be a summer of hope for those we seek to serve.
Help us to reflect your hope through kindness and generosity,
That lives may flourish and grow in the warmth of your love. Amen

And finally, a Post Script from Linda

It is with sadness we learn of **Keith's** retirement as Diocesan Treasurer. We thank him for his amazing contributions, love and support over the last thirteen years and will be marking the occasion at our Cathedral service on the 9th August (contact Beryl with contributions/gifts/letters of appreciation, etc.); Awaiting **clarification letter**/template from Richard Miller (MSH) to all members re Direct Debit arrangements; I have delayed writing, because I still have house-sale-issues. However, I am happily settled in Westleton and my **contact details** are Dragonfly Cottage, Bakers Lane, Westleton, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 3AZ; landline: 01728 648772 and my mobile 07341083576 (although not used much because it's still a very poor reception!).

Garden Party: covid guidelines, job requirements, etc. may be subject to change – don't let that put you off coming! **Changes in MU branches/new ways of working?** Suggested **Service for Thanksgiving and Transition from Branch to Group** for any branches struggling to find officers for the next triennium ... Faith, Fun and Fellowship groups are the "In-Thing"! More details at Council.