

MOTHERS` UNION MANCHESTER DIOCESE.

FAITH & POLICY REPORT TO COUNCIL 3rd.NOVEMBER, 2012

One of Mothers` Union objectives is maintaining a worldwide fellowship in prayer, worship and service and the Faith & Policy Unit, Mary Sumner House, is very much involved in providing resources to assist us with this, for which we are very grateful.

We have been advised to set aside time from busy schedules for Bible reading, prayer or just being, and this can be really helpful.

Every day at noon Mothers` Union members are encouraged to pray – the midday prayers in `Families Worldwide` may be used. The daily prayers in this publication are divided into five sections, each having a different theme. When a diocese reaches its turn in this Wave of Prayer` it often holds special services. During this week each branch may take responsibility for praying on a particular day. Manchester Diocese holds these in May.

On each second Thursday of the month, deaneries of Manchester, on a rota basis, present in the Lady Chapel of Manchester Cathedral, a short half hour service of prayer and reflection. Some members deliberately arrange this day for shopping in the city centre and combine it with a visit to Thursday Prayer, followed by the Cathedral Eucharist, and then go into the café afterwards for lunch and fellowship. These services are open to anyone who would like to attend. Why not take a friend?

Archdeaconries, deaneries, and branches arrange beautiful festival services throughout the year. If you are free, please give them your support – everybody will be made welcome.

For those members who are attracted to a longer period of prayer and meditation, Quiet Days are held in the Cathedral, twice a year. Look out for the dates and if you have not already done so, try one out. The next one is scheduled for Friday, November 16th, led by

Revd. Sandra Kierney, our Archdeaconry Chaplain for Salford. We meet in the Cathedral Library for coffee from 10 a.m. onwards, and the event will start promptly at 10.30 a.m. Please bring your own lunch (drinks will be provided) and a donation of £2.50 to cover expenses. A 2.30 p.m. finish will enable you to get home quickly before the rush hour traffic.

Retreat Days have taken place during this triennial, in different locations, to ensure that members could travel easily to at least one of them, and recently a week-end was arranged at the Foxhill Spiritual Retreat and Conference Centre, Frodsham.

Each of these was very successful, and it is intended to hold more of them in the future.

Indoor Members who have difficulty in getting to church, are each issued with resources for prayers on various topics, which they use regularly. This extra support is invaluable.

Earlier this year each deanery was asked to supply a knitted square for each of their Indoor Members and these were stitched together to form a blanket, which was draped over a chair for all to see during our Diocesan Festival held at the Cathedral on June 25th.

If you know of anyone who cannot get out to Church services and who might like to become an Indoor Member, do approach and invite her/him.

The Diocesan Prayer Chain representatives have continued to receive, pray for, and pass on names of people requiring urgent prayer. Every member in Manchester Diocese may make use of this facility, which is manned by a dedicated group of people.

Social Policy used to be a separate unit with its own co-ordinator, but several years ago it was thought that as prayer should be accompanied by action, it would be more appropriate for it to become another spoke under the umbrella of Prayer and Spirituality, and the name of was changed to Faith & Policy.

Numerous questionnaires relating to the Bye Buy Childhood Campaign and family life issues have been circulated, completed and analysed by staff at Mary Sumner House.

It is satisfying to know that the opinions of Mothers` Union really count and influence action taken by government departments.

New growth is anticipated in the coming triennial during which we will be concentrating on praying, campaigning and enabling, but I will soon be at the end of my term of office as Faith & Policy Co-ordinator. I have thoroughly enjoyed the last six years, which have been a rewarding experience, and I would like to thank the officers and staff at Mary Sumner House, Barbara Taylor, our Diocesan President, the officers and trustees of Manchester Diocese, all the representatives of the Faith & Policy Unit, in their various roles, and the Mothers Union members, without whose wonderful support I would not have survived, and not forgetting our Secretary Judith Hilton for her forbearance.

Lily Critten.

