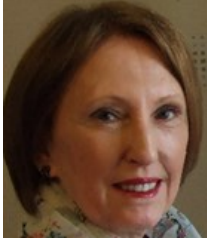


A letter from your President



"For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

Romans 8: 24-25

I do have hope as we start another new year, even after the month of January which seems to go on for ever! It will be a busy time as it includes our elections for 2025 and our End of Triennium Celebrations. Of course, this brings its challenges and questions about the unknown and we need to be patient and positive. Please pray that members will be encouraged to help form our next Trustee Board and also take on officer and smaller roles within the diocese. There is so much talent and experience out there and we need to use it. Do you know of anyone? Have you asked them? I have confidence that you do and you will.

A definition of Hope is to expect with confidence, to trust. I was very privileged to once again attend the Christmas Celebration service at HMP Forest Bank organised by the Chaplaincy. The service was entitled "HOPE is BORN." It was a wonderful and uplifting service for those men present who probably do not have hope most of the time. I was introduced to Matt Britton, who certainly gave those men hope through his amazing acting to retell scripture. How those men cheered. Matt is a real beacon of positivity. I read somewhere that beacons of positivity are a reflection of God's heart. One of the men playing in the little music group at the service was a concert pianist and well known composer in his country of origin. He was very affected by the service and is determined not to repeat his mistakes. He has renewed hope through his contact with the chaplaincy and the times when he is able to play the keyboard. He can only wait with patience, try to remain positive and hope.

The tiny little word "hope" can change a negative attitude to a positive one. It energises us and lifts us up. Seeing life through a lens of hope can help us see it through God's perspective, the One who knows what lies ahead, the Author of hope. So, let's lift our eyes, hearts and minds to see the way our Lord does. As we start our Lenten journey we will be patient and trust that hope will take us on another exciting journey this year that we won't forget and lead to exciting and fulfilling opportunities for 2025.

With my love and prayers, Christine x



The Very Reverend Rogers Govender,
Dean of Manchester
warmly invites you to Evensong

Admission to the Order of William Temple

Canon Geoffrey Tattersall, KC
Canon Barbara Christine Taylor
Sunday 3 March 2024, at 5.30pm

To help us with our planning:
Please email your reply to
nidhi.sinha@manchestercathedral.org
Indicating how many guests you wish to bring by
Fri, 1 March 2024.

Clergy are invited to robe.
Please arrive by 5pm

The Dean has sent this invitation to all members of Mothers' Union in Manchester.

There is no need to RSVP - just come along and you will be made most welcome.



Please



It is good to learn from each other, to encourage, to share the joys (and the sorrows); so please let the office know what you are doing in your group, send us photos, or post on Facebook or Twitter.

- info@MothersUnionManchester.org
- www.MothersUnionManchester.org
- Mothers' Union Manchester
- @MUmanchesterdio
- Mothers' Union Manchester Diocese

Calendar of Events, Dates and Opportunities in 2024

Thu 14 March	A Moment with God from 12 noon Mothers' Union Manchester Diocese - YouTube
Sun 7 April	Salford & Leigh Deanery Festival - St Paul's Walkden at 4pm
Thu 11 April	A Moment with God from 12 noon Mothers' Union Manchester Diocese - YouTube
Fri 26 April	Spring Council - St John's House, Bury at 10.30am
Thu 9 May	A Moment with God from 12 noon Mothers' Union Manchester Diocese - YouTube
Mon 13 May	Bury & Rossendale Deanery Festival - St Mary's Rawtenstall at 7pm
Thu 13 June	Bolton Deanery Festival - St Matthew's Little Lever
Fri 9 August	Bolton Archdeaconry Festival - St Maxentius Bradshaw, Bolton
Sat 26 Oct	AGM and Autumn Council - St John's House at 10.30am <i>Please note change of date</i>

Condolences

It is with great sadness that we have heard of the passing of :

Barbara Prestley, St Maxentius Church
Shelagh Beetson, Christ Church Walmersley

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.
May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace

Congratulations

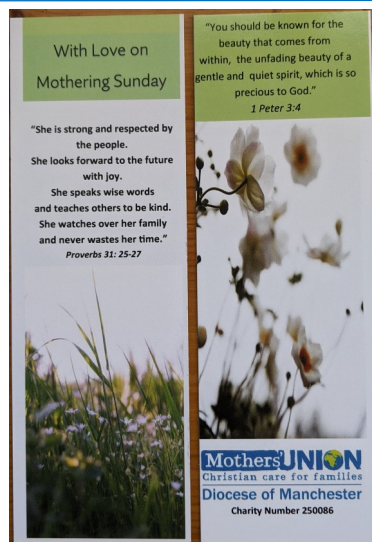
We are delighted to send our love to Molly and Peter Marsh, of St. John Facit, who celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversary on February 15th, 2024



and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Mark 10:8

Special Card Requests

Requests to Mary Sumner House for special birthday and anniversary cards should be made to membership@mothersunion.org



Bookmarks

produced especially for Mothering Sunday by MU in Manchester. These are 20p each and are available from our shop.

Gifts of Dignity

Help mothers, grandmothers and caregivers around the world to have a brighter future by giving a Gift of Dignity.

Lots more information here, including how to add a name to the book of remembrance in memory of a mother figure.

[Make A Mother's Day 2024 | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](#)



Sunday, 10th March

What is Mothers' Union doing in your parish or branch this Mothering Sunday? Do please let us know and send us some photographs for our next newsletter in April. (Remember, so often those "we've always done it" items provide inspiration for others!)



WE NEED YOUR HELP

We are forming **support groups** within our membership. If you are interested in joining a small group in any of the following areas please get in touch with the office:

- ◇ **AFIA (Away from it All)**
- ◇ **Domestic Abuse**
- ◇ **Newsletter/Social Media/General Communication**
- ◇ **Faith**
- ◇ **Membership**
- ◇ **Manchester projects**
- ◇ **Overseas Links**

Christ Church Ainsworth

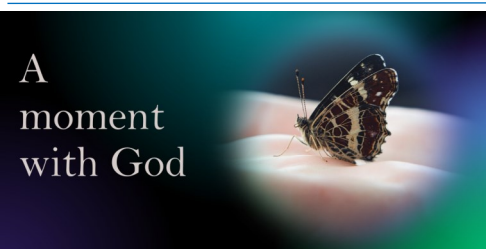
This poem was written by a lady who visited our branch to share her poetry with us. At the time she knew very little about Mothers' Union but this is what she learned after one visit.

Jennifer White

Many thousands are our numbers, yet together we are one,
Off'ring love and prayer and fellowship and faith to build upon.
Touching hearts and lives and futures where our banners fly unfurled;
Here within our own communities and all across the world.
Ever loving, ever giving, ever sowing God's good seed,
Reaching out to those in peril, reaching out to those in need.
Supporting and encouraging, through good times and through bad;

United as a family through happy times and sad.
Never falt'ring in our quest to leave the world a brighter place;
In our bid to spread God's love and care, throughout the human race.
Our members all around the world join hands in love and prayer;
None shall ever come between us and the fellowship we share.

AL Hartley 2016



At **St Michael's, Bamford** MU group we started the meeting with this month's A moment with God. We did this in November too and it works brilliantly. We wanted to pass on our thanks to those who put it together. The group thought it was wonderful and it felt special to join in with the songs and prayers that had been compiled.

Kirsten Rutherford

Thank You. We know of other branches which have used this at meetings. Have you? And how did it work? Would you like to but don't know how? There is help available so please ask - but your own church congregation may be the best place to start (and it spreads the word too)

Many of you who use Facebook are familiar with the **Midday Prayers** which are posted each Monday to Saturday and led by members and staff. They bring together a prayer community from literally all around the world, sharing requests for members, families and friends. If you have not experienced these just go to the Mothers' Union Facebook page and check them out.

Sunday Reflection

A new initiative in 2024 seeks to respond to those who miss Midday Prayers on Sundays and many who regret there is no longer an evening service to attend locally. A trial has produced a short reflection - in January on Climate Care, and currently a Lenten one, posted each Sunday at 6pm (although they are there to watch at any time). These too are on Mothers' Union's Fb page.



Some "very special visitors all the way from London" dropped in at the AGM of Christ Church Walmersley in February, to present gifts to **Bob Taylor**, as he stepped down after seven years as the diocese's first male branch leader. He will now relieve **Barbara Silvester** who steps down after 10 years as treasurer.

RAISING AWARENESS

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



More details and lots of resources are available at

[RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse | MothersUnion \(mothersunion.org\)](https://www.mothersunion.org)

RISE UP against Domestic Abuse is Mothers' Union's new campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse.

The aim is to make sure that activism against domestic abuse and gender-based violence happens 365 days a year and not just during the 16 Days of Activism campaign in November and December.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone from any walk of life. It includes the educated, the affluent, both women and men. Abuse can and does happen anywhere. Unfortunately some people hide behind miscommunicated Bible passages to justify their actions or feel they should stay with an abusive partner. Mothers' Union wants to raise awareness that this is not OK.

So, what is happening in the Diocese of Manchester?

Please let us know what your group or church is doing.

<p>At the Seven Saint's Team, in response to the RISE up campaign, we decided to contact FortAlice our local refuge and see if we could help with anything they needed for Christmas.</p> <p>We received a list of things the children had asked for, and with donations we were able to get quite a lot of the things on that list. It included 2 dolls, a box of Lego, a Football, Rugby Ball and some Crafting items.</p> <p>We have also received a letter back thanking us for our donation and help in making a special Christmas for some of the children in this difficult time.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Christine Faulkner</i></p>	<p>At Christ Church Denton we have made inroads into the bronze award for the Rise Up Challenge. We have put up the posters, had an introduction to it as part of the service, prayed as part of intercessions at church and contacted our local women's refuge. Once we've had our first meeting we will be supplying toiletries</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Pam Evans</i></p>	<p>St. Paul's Monton have applied for the Bronze Award. For the Bronze Award you need to have proof of contact with a local refuge and commencement of welcome/ leaving packs. With the help of Women's Aid in Salford we are putting together a list of items to be included in Welcome Packs for both women and children. <i>(This will be sent out generally when we have it finalised.)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Christine Sharp</i></p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <p>Can WE take inspiration from these groups? Remember: every journey begins with a single step, so think what yours could be.</p> </div>		

MU Live

TOTAL of those impacted by our work,

In 2023 **6155**

In January 2024 **396**



HMP Manchester

Governor O' Reilly of Visits and Reception has asked that I pass on a thank you to you all for your donations and all the kind support you have provided to HMP Manchester.

Linzi Scott DARS Recovery Practitioner

From **St. Andrew's, Blackley** Joan Raine gives us this update:

We feel as the only branch in North Manchester it is important that we keep sharing the news that the MU is still alive and doing great things. We are not a big branch but we tend to look out for one another and prayer is our first go to resource. COVID made such an impact on us as a church. I believe our 100th birthday is 2026 so we are aiming to celebrate that. Doris Henry, our branch leader, is having treatment for cancer at the moment so we are all trying to support her and carry on as normal. We are setting up an MU prayer and telephone rota for her.



Each year we sponsor the daffodils for Mothering Sunday which our scouts attend. We decided a few years ago that all members of our small congregation would receive a bunch as nowadays men and women are both carers and parents. We find everyone appreciates this. We wrap the bunches in fancy cellophane, attach a card and ribbon and then give everyone a MU Mothering Sunday card along with the daffs.

We have a Toddler Group, originally run by Doris our branch member. Again, COVID had a big impact on this group and the MU support by providing any toys, books, teaching aids etc. that are needed. At Christmas we supplied Christmas stockings and gifts for the children and also we have funded their end of term and Easter parties. We supplied raffle prizes for the group at Christmas and this was much appreciated by the mums and carers and they felt included in the toddler club.

We run a really big Christmas fair in November every year and it is really well supported by the local community. We see people at this event enjoying the MU hospitality. It is something where the work for it starts in mid-January and we work throughout the year collecting and making things and receiving donations, especially toys, which are always in exceptional condition. We feel this is something our branch can do for the local community by providing reasonably priced toys that are nicely presented for sale to local families who are struggling with finances. From the proceeds of last year's Christmas fair we hope to provide new camping equipment for our young scouts as the old tents are leaking water. We class the scouts as part of our MU project of care for our church children and young people and support them in any way we can.



Below is a prayer that was given to me by a friend in the Salvation Army during the COVID pandemic. I too lost my dear husband to COVID in January 2021 so the prayer meant a great deal to me.



"Dear Lord, we united today from distinct parts of our journey. Some feel lost, some are searching, and some feel loved, while others are hurting. Whatever we feel and wherever we are, you are our parent who walks with us, knows, and understands us. We pray to you for comfort and peace. As we travel with you, we can feel the beauty of new life. We would also like to thank you for our kids and how they smile and make our lives happy. Help us to welcome kids into our family and shower them with your unconditional love and blessings. Amen."

Are you looking for a Day Out with a Focus?



'**Threads through Creation**' is an astonishing textile art exhibition showing at Blackburn Cathedral from 6th March to 14th April. It might be a bit of a journey for some, but it's probably right up their street for many members – it's a real treat! The show is touring twenty cathedrals, and there has been some lovely feedback from MU members.

It consists of twelve beautiful silk panels re-imagining the story of creation from the bible. They're huge – 2.7m high, up to nearly 4m wide. It's one of the largest textile art projects by a single artist, ever. It took artist Jacqui Parkinson *three years - and eight million stitches!*

People of all ages and backgrounds love it. It's great to bring friends too. You'll find the huge scale, vibrant colours, dramatic and complex designs truly breathtaking. You've never seen anything like it ...

Admission is free (donations welcome) Blackburn Cathedral is easily accessible by car, bus or train.

For directions and more information: www.blackburncathedral.com

<http://www.creation-threads.co.uk>

The Knife Angel

... is coming to Bury.

This contemporary sculpture, made from over 100,000 seized blades, was created by Alfie Bradley and the British Ironworks Centre in 2018.

200 knife banks were made available and amnesties held so people could anonymously donate knives, whilst knives seized by police were also included. It was created in order to highlight knife crime in the United Kingdom and educate young people on the harmful effect violent behaviour can have on their communities.

Not only does the Angel act as a catalyst for turning the tide on violent and aggressive behaviour, but it also acts as a beautiful memorial designed to celebrate those lives which have been lost through these violent and thoughtless actions.

The Knife Angel will be unveiled in Bury town centre on Friday 1st March. It will stand near the intersection of The Rock and Tithebarn Street until 27th March.



- ⇒ Whilst neither of these displays are specifically Mothers' Union based we thought they would be of interest to many of our members.
- ⇒ If you go to see the Knife Angel why not visit Bury's famous market - on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays?
- ⇒ There are lots of cafés but Bury Parish Church Coffee Shop (not far from the sculpture) is open 10.30am to 2.30pm on Wednesdays and 11.30am to 1.30pm on Fridays.
- ⇒ Take the opportunity to visit the Mothers' Union Shop in St John's House - just a few minutes along The Rock from the 'Angel'. Monday and Tuesdays tend to be the best days but you can always ring to check.