

A letter from your President



"For where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them." Matthew 18:20

I am sure that like myself we are all looking forward to being able to meet as families indoors and then hopefully to see the end of social distancing in the summer. It will be quite an event to have face to face meetings, take part in larger acts of worship and enjoy spending time catching up, chatting and planning activities and social events, greatly missed by us all. It's an exciting thought.

The seeds of our "Let's Chat" initiative were sown during various meetings with members and deanery and branch leaders over the past few months. Starting to meet socially in gardens or outside is a popular idea, really getting to know each other better and sharing experiences and thoughts for the future, even organising simple fundraising events. This brings to mind the women in Jesus' time gathering at the well each day to fetch drinking water, mingle with friends and exchange news.



We will take things slowly and at a pace we are comfortable with. In the meantime, in our local communities, we are still continuing to offer support where we can as highlighted in the "Manchester Making a Difference" report taken from MU Live for Spring Council, with nearly 6,000 lives touched since last October. Our Away From It All (AFIA) scheme is being extended to offer day breaks and funding for trips for key workers and those keeping our essential services going throughout the pandemic. Please do ask for information.

We are asking our branches and groups to start finding out about new areas where help and extra support is needed. There will be a "mapping" resource available to use when meetings start again. We are concentrating much more on countering abuse and those affected by mental health issues. It was a humbling experience at Council to hear from those who volunteer or work in these areas, as well as those offering much needed support for the vulnerable and disadvantaged in the community, both young and old, and we continue to pray for them all.

With my love, Christine x

**"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." Jeremiah 29:11**

THANK YOU to Christine who has agreed to serve for another three years as our Diocesan President



CSW65

Mothers' Union participated in strength in the first ever virtual meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women shortly before Easter, with 26 members attending from 12 different countries.

We were delighted to work closely with the Anglican Communion Office (ACO) delegation, and to hold joint sessions, as well as collaborating with fellow members of the global faith movement, Side by Side, and with members of the UK Womens Movement Alliance (NAWO).

There were a number of speakers representing MU at various events and the delegates all took away specific personal actions to increase impact in their communities.



Hope for the future

Questions from Bishop Emma to the chaplains at their recent conference but for us all to consider.

- What had we hoped for?
- What do we now hope for?
- What hope is alive in you?

Hope you haven't missed this:



Our [YouTube channel](#) is a great place to visit.

Not only will you find the monthly **Thursday Prayer** service but also one for our **Wave of Prayer** in April. It is not too late to enjoy the images and the readings (by a wide variety of members and young people), not forgetting the liturgy created by our President, Christine.

New Life is a short selection of photographs to music, including your Easter gardens, with poetry and bible verses on the theme of Spring.

Calendar of Events, Dates and Opportunities

The **Triennial Election** process continues and branch leaders have all relevant dates.

Thursday Prayers (Ascension Day)	May 13th	Manchester MU YouTube channel	from 12 noon
		Mothers' Union Manchester Diocese - YouTube	
Thy Kingdom Come service	May 14th	Mothers' Union Facebook & YouTube channel	at 2.00pm
Quiet Session	May 22nd	Manchester MU YouTube and Facebook	
Summer of Hope appeal including MU On the Move	June / July	see separate item	
Office closed	June 7-11th		
Thursday Prayers	June 10th July 8th	Manchester MU YouTube channel	from 12 noon
		Mothers' Union Manchester Diocese - YouTube	
Board of Trustees (all day)	July 19th	yet to be determined whether online or in person	

FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Mary Sumner Day	August 9th, 2021	Online Service (marking 100 years since Mary Sumner died)	
End of Triennium Service of Thanksgiving	September 18th, 2021	Manchester Cathedral	at 2.30pm
Annual Gathering Virtual Event	September 25th, 2021	details to be announced by Mothers' Union	
End of Triennium Provincial Service	November 6th, 2021	Liverpool Cathedral	at 3.00pm

Chaplaincy Team

Christine Faulkner, our Faith co-ordinator, is delighted to report that we have a full team of four chaplains to support us in the forthcoming triennium.

The Revd **Denise Smith** continues in Bolton; and three new chaplains are: in Manchester, the Revd **Jenni Beaumont**; in Rochdale, the Revd **Kirsty Screeton**; and in Salford, the Revd **Ross Garner**.

Please support them all with your prayers.

Shop still open for sales

Despite Church House being mainly closed our shop continues to trade—remotely—thanks to Frances Brough.

Frances is happy to order and post goods on to you. If anyone would like an assortment of cards she is happy to post a selection to you, and don't forget that badges, pens, stickers, prayer books, etc are still available.

Please contact Frances at shopmothers@gmail.com or by phoning the Office.

The new catalogue due in June will include Christmas cards—don't miss out!

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. Amen

It was with great sadness, in late 2020, that we learnt of the sudden death of **Sandra Ashcroft**. Sandra was a member at St Andrew's Dearnley and became the very first Archdeaconry President for Rochdale. She served for six years in that role and former Diocesan President, Jean Williamson recalls her diligence and commitment in post. She then moved to the Diocese of Worcester where in 2017 Claines branch celebrated her 50 years of membership.



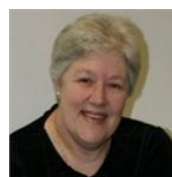
Our thanks also for the contributions by each of the four to our recent Wave of Prayer service on YouTube.

Trustee update



Kirsten Rutherford, our Communications Co-ordinator has been accepted to train for ordination. We assure her of our continued love and prayers as she prepares for this new stage of her ministry and service.

Treasurer update



We are grateful to Barbara Taylor for 'holding the fort' while we find a new treasurer. Do you know anyone who would be interested in shadowing or could be mentored if not ready to take on the role immediately? It is imperative that we find a new treasurer as soon as possible. Potentially this could be a paid position. Barbara is happy to discuss what is involved.

On the Move

[Our story | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](#)



Thanks to Jasmine Rutherford for these colourful feet.

We are being encouraged as part of the **Summer of Hope** appeal to celebrate 145 years of Mothers' Union by taking on this challenge - to have fun and raise funds.

Follow the link, or speak to your branch leader, for the pack which gives more details. (Please remember to register on the website as a fundraiser.)

Maybe one of the suggestions on the right will fit the bill for you, your family or your branch? There are lots of tips in the pack on safety, fundraising, permissions and ideas for other activities, so there is no excuse for any of us. Prayers will be available on this link too.

This may be a really good way to restart your meetings after so long.

PLEASE share your ideas!

Ideas for MU On the Move 2021

- δ Have a target— maybe £14.50
- δ Run or walk 14.5 km (or miles)
- δ which could be as a relay, or in stages
- δ Tell 14 / 15 people about Mothers' Union and its work
- δ Set a group target of £145
- δ Use the prayer points available online
- δ Set up a collection jar
- δ Hold a quiz (there is one in the pack)
- δ Involve those who are not members
- δ As well as registering on the website, do please let our Manchester Office know what you have planned. If you would like publicity on our social media channels just let us know.
- δ Please let the Office know too how much you have raised.
- δ Finally, please let us have your photos —there is a permissions form in the pack.

Thy Kingdom Come

Since May 2016, Thy Kingdom Come has represented an ever growing call to prayer. Now present in 172 countries around the world, this call is stronger than ever.

A special service for Mothers' Union members and friends will be uplifting and encouraging, featuring contributions from across the UK and around the world.

The address will be given by our Central Chaplain, Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson, Bishop of Penrith and will be available on both Facebook and YouTube at 2pm on 14th May.

Quiet Session

It has not been possible to plan our usual Quiet Days or Weekend because of the pandemic.

So Christine Faulkner and the Revd Denise Smith have planned a Quiet Session for 22nd May 2021, on the theme of TRANSITION. The session will be available on YouTube. Hard copies will be available too so everyone can join in. It is planned to take about 2 hours.



Further details from the Office 0161 828 1427 or via email.

Hope Prayer

Maybe bring an image to your mind now of something that gives you hope or brings you hope – candle, family photos, quote, artwork, craft piece, favourite walking spot, or holiday place etc

Father, Thank you that in a world of despair, You are our Hope. In a world of darkness, You are our Light. In a world of sorrow, You are our joy. Help us to share the Hope of our hearts with one another Enable us to give Hope to others through Your work amongst us Use us to transform our nation and to spread Your Hope to every corner of this nation. May our land flourish by the preaching of Your word and the praising of Your name. In Jesus Name. Amen.

From the chaplains' conference

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MANCHESTER DIOCESE

Figures taken from MU Live October 2020 – April 2021

Having an impact on lives within our community

The aim of MU Live is to build a picture of how and where we are working, how many people are reached and how lives are being changed. This will help us to reflect, to learn and to celebrate, and be proud to be a member of Mothers' Union. We can only show this if we are provided with information on activities and projects undertaken by our branches, groups and individual members. Please keep us up to date with what is going on. There is so much to celebrate.

	Church	Community	External	Homes	Hospitals	Prisons	Refuges	TOTAL
Crafting	72	100	36		2582			2790
Nurturing faith	179	42	150		120			491
Offering gifts of love		409	95	23	323	1660	151	2661

Total - 5942



Spring Council - 24 April 2021

Thank You

to all our speakers at the recent meeting of Council. Some were recorded so ask if you would like to see these presentations.

It was very clear from them all that there are so many areas in which we, as members of Mothers' Union, can and do make a significant difference.

Diane Hawkins, High Sheriff of Manchester, spoke of her involvement in Fortalice (meaning "a place of safety"), working with victims of domestic abuse. The theme continued with **Kirsty McAllister** of Trafford Domestic Abuse Service (TDAS) whilst the problems faced by the clients of Trafford Rape Crisis, as explained by **Vicky English** are similar again. **Jane Gregory**, unable to join us, sent information about Salford Survivor Project.

Another group of speakers focussed on the difficulties numerous families are facing, many of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. **Nicola Williams** represented Safe Families; **Pauline Town** spoke of the "A Bed for the Night" project; while **Kelly Fiorini** spoke about the work of Out There with children and young people. Unfortunately **Christine Mullen** was unable to be present but sent information about the Sash Project. **Rosemary Taylor** spoke about her support of the Attic Project.



Steph Openshaw introduced **Wiggle** who in Bolton has been helping to introduce children to worship, through the Children Changing Places Project. The Diocese hopes to spread this initiative to other areas so if you would be interested in helping to make Wiggle procreate

please have a word with Frances Brough (shopmothers@gmail.com) as, through our sewing and knitting skills, we can help with this.

Facing the future after Covid

was the theme running throughout our meeting.

The Revd Kirsty Screeton talked of her very positive experience at the recent online Chaplains' Conference - with a retreat led by Bishop Emma, Central Chaplain, and worldwide updates from Sheran Harper, Worldwide President.

Margaret Whittaker, BL St Anne Tottington, Bury spoke about the plans she and her committee have discussed for their return to meeting in person.



Christine Sharp introduced the concept of **Let's Chat** - see her letter for more.



Pauline Town with her "lads and lasses"

Diane Hawkins, High Sheriff, was delighted to receive these Dream Toys for Fortalice, courtesy of another generous donation of £500 from The Entertainer store.



Prepare to be surprised

The Revd Canon **Simon Bessant** - Head of Discipleship and Evangelism in Manchester Diocese - provided an excellent and lively perspective on the Future after Covid.

Simon gave us a very quick look at God's big picture, illustrating with many examples throughout the Old Testament of God's faithfulness and the ability of his People to "mess up"; numerous examples of times when the picture looked different from that which was expected; finally speaking of the death and resurrection of Christ.






When all seems lost, God is faithful, and he will do a new thing - Africa and China were cited as examples of this.

He encouraged us (both the Church and Mothers' Union), post Covid, to look to our God, and prepare to be surprised.

"I am happy now that I don't need to take a knife to bed with me to feel safe." (a boy aged 6)

"I like walking in the rain with my hood up as no-one can see I am crying." (a teenage boy)

Quotes from two who were helped by Fortalice

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