



## Email News August 2020

Welcome to the **Mothers' Union Diocese of Leicester email news**.

If you are a branch leader, please forward, or otherwise share the contents with your members.

### Autumn dates and changes

We are beginning to look at our Autumn dates but remain very cautious, as I am sure you all are too. St Martins House is still closed and Heather, our Administrator, has to work from home by email.

- 10<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> August: Administrator on summer break
- 1<sup>st</sup> September: Deadline for MUspaper – please continue to send items as an email edition may be possible
- 9<sup>th</sup> September: Finance & Administration Group – most likely by email
- 10<sup>th</sup> September: Diocesan Members' Gathering in Kibworth **POSTPONED**
- 16<sup>th</sup> September: Trustees Meeting – most likely by email
- 26<sup>th</sup> September: Annual Gathering (formerly the General Meeting) in Belfast **POSTPONED TO 2021**
- 6<sup>th</sup> October: Deanery Leaders' Meeting **CANCELLED**
- 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October: Administrator on half term break
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November: Trustees' Meeting – to be decided later
- 12<sup>th</sup> November: Cathedral Prayer Fellowship **CANCELLED**
- 17<sup>th</sup> November: Diocesan Council (afternoon) – to be decided later
- 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence – prayers will be distributed by email
- 1<sup>st</sup> December: Advent Carol Service **POSTPONED TO 2021**

### Membership

Please keep Heather informed of any membership and Indoor Membership changes. The January 2021 edition of *Families Worldwide* will, again, be sent out direct by Mary Sumner House so it is essential that records are up-to-date.

### News from our overseas link dioceses

**Diocese of Eastern Zambia:** They, like us, have had their churches closed because of COVID-19. Diocesan President, Catherine Mbeta, writes "*We are fine. We are now*

*starting to go back to church under the new normal. God is protecting us. Praise be to God Almighty."*

Mothers' Union is busy in the **Diocese of Temotu** in the Solomon Islands where COVID-19 has led to restrictions on imports and food supplies. Members have been running cooking classes to make the most of food which can be foraged from the bush. Provincial President, Pamela Abama, writes "*It brings women together by sharing their cooking skills with one another in such a time. Truly, it promotes Christ's love and care in his mission.*"

In the **Diocese of Mombasa**, Kenya, our link correspondent, Phoebe Maina writes to us: "*We thank God for how far he has brought us despite the pandemic. I realised that even from your end you are facing a lot of challenges. It's been really tough for us too and currently families worship from their homes and also follow online services. We introduced online prayers in our Mothers' Union Council group and other groups. This is the only way we can keep in touch with one another since we don't have physical meetings. Let us continue upholding one another in prayer. May the Lord bless you and keep you safe. We cherish your friendship with our diocese.*"

If you would like to hear more about any of our prayer link dioceses, please contact Ros Dobbin (rosdobbin@aol.com) who would be very happy to share more details.

## **News from Mary Sumner House**

Thank you to everyone who has felt able to contribute to the special appeal to raise £1 million to cover loss of income to central Mothers' Union during 2020. To date £804,021 has been raised! This was an unprecedented appeal during an unprecedented global situation when, like many charities, there was nowhere for Mothers' Union to turn except to its members. The central trustees expect 2021 to be even more difficult and are planning how to control expenditure, which will unfortunately involve making some staff redundant. Please pray for the whole organisation at this time.

## **What have you been doing during lockdown?**

Janice Lunn, Market Harborough Branch Leader, writes: "*I have been regularly emailing or phoning all my members. A positive side of this is that I now know the members and their families much better, which is lovely. We did hold a committee meeting by Zoom and all the members managed it and it was very enjoyable and helpful. Our project "Little bags of love" for three of our primary schools is still a work in progress. I had planned for all the membership to be involved in putting the contents together at a meeting. That has obviously not been possible. However, I did ask the members to send me ideas for the two included prayer cards - one for the child, the other for the parent/carer. The committee then choose from the offered prayers and these have been printed and laminated in the church office. We aim to give these bags (approximately 140) out on the first day that the children start school. I am to check with the school to see what is possible in September as we may not be allowed to be present, dependent on the restrictions at that time. We very much hope to meet the parents/carers and spread God's love in our actions to them. A very positive outcome from this contact with schools is that we have been*

*invited to help with reading at the C of E primary next term. I am also planning an informal meet in the park for members who can, near to Mary Sumner Day.”*

So, what have **you** been doing? Linda Poole would love to hear about your experiences for a feature in *MUspaper*.

## **A message from our Diocesan Chaplain, Diane**

Dear Sisters in the Mothers' Union,

It seems such a long time since I last wrote, almost a different era. None of us realised that the upheaval caused by COVID-19 would last so long, or be so severe and disturbing for so many people. We could not have imagined that 46,000 people would die. I hope that your family has not been affected, and that you have kept safe. For those of you living inside the Red Line that demarcates Leicester, you will have had the double blow of coming out of some of the more stringent social distancing measures, only to find yourselves back in isolation. Hopefully, by the time you read this, things will have eased again.

Like me, you will have experienced many mood changes during this time. At the start, I have to say I felt a sort of liberation from daily pressures, the chance to do things I hadn't normally got time for, like reading, and going through all my late husband's papers, a job I had started several years ago. And I had time to **relax**. A WhatsApp support network was established in the Close where I live, others did my shopping, the weather got better and the garden beckoned. I slept better than I usually did. It wasn't all bad. But that feeling didn't last. Not touching anyone for 13 weeks was unnatural, and I felt it. Then Boris allowed me to "bubble" with my family, and life became more normal again. The joy of being hugged is incalculable! Since then, I've been able to help occasionally, childminding my grandchildren when parents needed support. Some of you will have had similar experiences, but some will still be longing for physical contact with family.

But as I pondered the way my moods had changed, I wondered how God might use these changes and how I might come to terms with these altered perceptions. I have concluded that our temperaments are different and vary from time to time. We can use them on a daily basis, and when we are attentive to the Spirit of God within us, we can learn to put our temperaments at any particular time to His service. So when we are happy and energetic we can serve with vigour. But when we feel more introverted, we can deepen our contemplative side. When we feel that we are no longer useful we can learn to accept the ministry of others and simply abide in the grace of God. As a community we need all these different gifts, as individuals we need to recognise that our feelings change, and that all can be taken and blessed by God. So let's learn to live with our temperaments as gifts from God that help us deepen our spiritual lives. God bless you all.

## **Prayer focus for August 2020**

- It has been very encouraging to hear how you are keeping in contact with each other during these difficult times by such means as telephone, email, Zoom, outside gatherings. Please continue to pray for each other, remembering especially those who are unwell or who have been bereaved during this period.
- Please pray for the Trustees and staff at Mary Sumner House and also for our own Diocesan President, Yvonne, as she bears the responsibility for members in the diocese.

- In his presidential address at General Synod in July, the new Archbishop of York said that this current period of isolation from each other and from our churches and activities is a stark reminder that **we** are the places where God is to be encountered and it is in us and through us that God can be made known to others.
- From Families Worldwide, Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July: *Lord, we give thanks that you are the one true constant in an ever-changing world. Please be with us in the situations that we face each day and give us the resilience we need to cope with setbacks and accomplish the things you have set before us.*

With best wishes,

Sue Wilson, Diocesan Trustee