

Mothers' Union Matters

in the Diocese of Chester
Spring 2023

Charity Number 221214



CELEBRATING
FAITH IN ACTION

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

From the Diocesan President

Dear Friends,

My letter to you in the last issue of MUM magazine was written just after our Diocesan Council meeting in November and although it had been a difficult meeting, I was enthusiastic about the year ahead and looking forward to continuing to get out and about and meet with members again.

It was so wonderful to attend the gathering in Belfast and then come home to our commissioning service, followed by a well-attended Diocesan Council at Hartford. Face-to-face meetings were again becoming normal, and it was lovely to catch up with friends, old and new. I was, therefore, terribly disappointed when at the end of November my travels ended abruptly. On November 27th my family and I were celebrating my birthday with a special meal, when I had an accident in the restaurant and fell to the floor, a freak accident. (And for those who are wondering, I was the designated driver on the night, so it wasn't due to too much celebrating!)

A man and his wife waiting for their meal just happened to be Paramedics and they rushed to help me. All I heard was "Leave her, we'll take care of her" and they did. They cared for me until the ambulance arrived 3 and a half hours later to take me to the hospital.

I had fractured my hip and I am now known as the Bionic woman, as during a successful surgery, the surgeon had inserted a nut and bolt into my leg.

I was in hospital until 7th December and I can't praise the Doctors and Nurses enough for the care I received, despite how extremely busy they all were.

Although I was well cared for, I was desperate to get home and my wonderful family ensured this happened as quickly as possible.

I followed all the instructions I was given and after weeks of rehabilitation I am now able to walk with a walking stick. I am continuing with my physiotherapy and making slow and steady progress.

My grateful thanks go to you for all the lovely cards and gifts I received and especially for the messages of love and support for both me and my husband John who is also unwell. Your love and prayers are a blessing that we both treasure and give us strength at this very difficult time.



I would also like to thank the Board of Trustees who have stepped in to carry on my work, allowing me the time to heal. I am now able to slowly return to my duties as Diocesan President and look forward to returning to some normality as the year progresses. I am now able to drive again, so will hopefully be able to get out and about to meet members in the coming months.

At the time of writing this letter, the membership renewals have been pouring into the office and I am delighted that so many of you have chosen to carry on supporting the vital work of Mothers’ Union, despite the rising costs we are all facing. I was reminded by one of our members that the cost of membership is less than buying a packet of chocolate digestives each week and I’m sure you will agree it’s better for our waistlines.

I hope that you continue to enjoy being a member of Mothers’ Union and that the love and support we share lifts your spirits when times are hard. This year our Annual Gathering will take place in York. It is a one-day event at the York Barbican followed by Evensong at York Minster. The Archbishop of York will be preaching, and I would like to share with you his thoughts on Mothers’ Union:

“Where would the Anglican Communion be without the Mothers’ Union? At home and across the world the Mothers’ Union offers the love and hope of Christ, helping to transform communities through teaching, prayer and pastoral care and by working with others to stop violence, injustice and hunger. I’m looking forward to being part of the Annual Gathering this year when I’ll be preaching at a special Evensong In York Minster

Rt Revd. Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York



I hope many of you will be able to attend the meeting and the service, it will be the last such event until 2026. More information is included in this magazine and on the Mothers’ Union website.

In the centre of this magazine you will find the information for our **Wave of Prayer** in May. This is a special time when we join together with our sisters and brothers across the world to pray for our work here in Chester and also the wider Mothers’ Union Community. I pray that this will be a time of fellowship and renewal for our branches and our members.

Thank you so very much for all your support for Mothers’ Union day by day year by year. With God’s help I hope to see you all in the very near future.

Love and prayers
Wendy

Below Chester Branch display their contribution to the Bags of Education appeal. An article giving the latest update on this Diocesan project can be found on pages 6 and 7



Annual Gathering 2023



ONE DAY - Friday 22nd September:

11am – 3.45 pm: Annual Gathering, York Barbican (doors open from 10.15am)

5.30pm - 7pm: Evensong, at York Minster

(Evensong is open to the public, so you are encouraged to get there early. A prayer will be dedicated to the Mothers' Union and the Archbishop of York will preach to the congregation)

Tickets are priced at £23.50, and are only available to purchase online from the Mothers' Union website at

<https://www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023>

Bags of Education



When we launched the Bags of Education partnership with Door of Hope in the summer of 2022, we hoped that our members here in Chester Diocese would be keen to support the project but we underestimated just how keen our branches and their church communities were to support this work. Your enthusiasm and generosity is overwhelming and Simon regularly comments to me that we are an answer to his many prayers. To date we have purchased over 200 Bags of Education which have been filled and sent to Door of Hope for distribution. 522 Bags of Education were sent out in December to children from impoverished areas of Eastern Europe, Ukraine—Moldova—Bulgaria—Romania. Through your support the lives of children and communities have been greatly impacted.

I recently received these photos showing children in the Kherson region of Ukraine receiving their Bags of Education, after 8 months of bombardment by Russia many of the buildings in these towns were destroyed including schools. Families are returning to their homes and trying to rebuild some normality in their lives. Children are desperate to return to school.

A stable internet connection allows teachers to teach classes online and the Bags of Education provide the much needed resources for children to complete their studies.





The CEO of Door to Hope recently sent this message
 “Many thanks Dawn to you and all the wonderful Mothers’ Union ladies for making such a big impact towards this much needed project in 2022, it of course would be wonderful to have you on board again in 2023”.

As we announced when we launched this project, we hoped it would be an ongoing partnership and I hope even more branches will get involved this year. Please speak to your branch leaders and committees if this is a project you would like to support. Ask them to get in touch with me to order the Bags of Education for you to fill. I will be placing an order in the coming weeks which I can then distribute at our Diocesan Council in July.



More photos, taken last year, from Eastern European countries where children are benefitting from this educational support



Thank you for your support, prayers and continued generosity .

Dawn



A trip down memory lane for Middlewich Deanery

Our Deanery Leader, Diana Bancroft, asked me to find out when Middlewich had its first Deanery banner. Looking through the minutes of the 1980s stirred up many memories, do you remember any or all of them?

Subs in 1981 were £1.00 (really?).

In the minutes everyone was referred to as 'Mrs', no first names. Middlewich Deanery Leaders in the 1980s were Mrs Lamb, Mrs Bishop, Mrs Lipa and Mrs Long.

Each Deanery had its own rep for Education, Overseas, Literature/Media, Social Concern, Young Families and Indoor Members. Great emphasis was placed on raising funds for Overseas.

We supported two African children, Ifeanyi and Dipuo with schooling. We also supported the soup kitchens in Africa. I remember our Deanery had a stall at an event held at Boosey's Garden Centre in Middlewich (now closed) and Charlie's Cafe in Northwich (still open) made a donation to the fund from each bowl of soup sold.

Much knitting was done, as Indoor Members always required bed socks, and we were reminded the MU thrives on the prayers of Indoor members at home and overseas.

Our Deanery sent £512.70 to Mary Sumner House towards the £200,000 appeal for a new roof.

Concern was expressed by members regarding television advertising of sanitary products in the early evening; an episode of 'One Foot in the Grave' was considered not in good taste; neither were the family problems portrayed in 'Eastenders'; WH Smith selling voodoo dolls, and the interest being shown in the occult in Wirral and Congleton!

And the Deanery banner? In 1985 it was agreed that Middlewich Deanery would have its own banner. This was paid for by Mrs Bishop and made by members. My church (Christ Church, Wharton, Winsford) is now taking its turn to host it in church alongside our branch MU banner.

Carol Dean, Secretary, Middlewich Deanery



HELP SHAPE THE WAY THINGS HAPPEN IN OUR DIOCESE

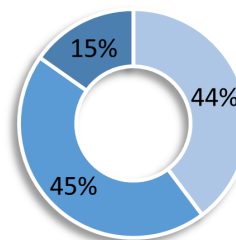
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Diocesan Service

The results for the two options to have either an annual service in one of three areas of the Diocese, or a service once every three years in Chester where both very close, with the result for an annual service just taking the lead.

However, after much discussion the Trustees felt that this would only be possible if we had a Diocesan Chaplain to lead the organisation of the service. It was therefore decided that we wouldn't have an Diocesan Service this year and would wait until a Chaplain had been appointed before arranging one.

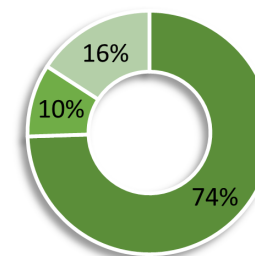
Here are the results



Diocesan Council

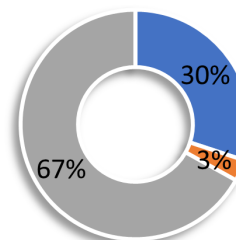
The questionnaire results indicate that members are happy to continue to hold our AGM and Diocesan Council meetings at the Parish Centre, St John's Hartford.

The Trustees approved this and bookings have been made for our meetings this year for Saturday 1st July and Saturday 4th November.



Enterprise Stall at Diocesan Council

The results of the questionnaire were that we do not need an Enterprise stall at our Diocesan Council meetings and that members are happy to continue to order from either Alan, or via the online shop. Please remember to select Chester as your diocese when ordering direct so that the sales are allocated to us.



Welcome to our new members

Middlewich St. Michael and All Angels

Jean Clement

Claire Dutton

Nantwich St Mary,

Sheila Crowley

Philippa Gomersall

Eileen Murphy

Sale St Anne

Lynda Bywater

Lynda Ronan,

Elaine Thompson.

Timperley Holy Cross with Christ Church,

Sue Brown

Kath Ryder

Judith Golds

Ann Savage

Yvonne Dearden

My Apologies! In the last issue of MUM, on page 10, I mistakenly attributed a photograph to St George, Stockport Branch, when it was of the new members at St Mary's Nantwich. I am sincerely hoping that in this issue I have set the records straight.

Below left are the members at St Mary's , Nantwich



Above Right These members were enrolled at St George's ,Stockport

Prison Ministry

I would like to thank all those Branches and individuals who have made donations to the Prison Fund since my last article. The account is now looking slightly healthier and this has enabled me to purchase four birthing bags, filling three of them with the necessary contents for the mum to be equipped to go into hospital to give birth. *(photo right)*

I have a few "spares" ready for the next couple of bags , as I found some

hand towels reduced to £2 each so had to buy a couple extra at that price! By the time this article is printed, the three bags will have been delivered to the Mother and Baby Unit at HMP Styal. I have asked the Chaplain, Louise, how many birthing bags on average are required each year ; she is not sure, but is going to look into it for me.

Apparently, they have quite a number of pregnant mums in custody at the moment, but it is possible that some of these will be released before their due date. As my grandchildren are all growing up, I have loved purchasing all the baby items (but very thankful that I am far too old for any more babies as it makes you quite broody!)



To try and save money in the future I have asked those of my branch members who can knit or crochet to do me some baby blankets, cardigans, booties, hats and soft toys suitable for new-borns I can use instead of purchasing these, so watch this space for some photographs in the future. Even shopping around each of these birthing bags together with the contents can cost around £45, if I have done my sums correctly as I am afraid I am better at spelling than adding up! I have also prepared a small Easter present (*picture left*) for each of the children currently in the Mother and Baby



Unit and these will be delivered at the same time as the birthing bags.

Each baby will receive a soft toy (as in the photo) together with a small chocolate rabbit. I have purchased two packets of the chocolates and these will be split between the children so they get one each. At the time of writing this article, which is the third week in February, there is one new baby on the Unit who is one week old, making a total of seven youngsters. The new baby will receive a soft toy, the same as the others, but Lynne Hibbert has already knitted a baby hat, mittens and booties set, so these can be given instead of the chocolate!

Of course, the support and items we give to the two prisons in our Diocese is an ongoing project, so I would ask that you to please keep up your wonderful support, especially financially, although I do appreciate that at the moment we all have to tighten our belts! Thank you once again for all the help you members give to the prison ministry.

Di Waller

News from St Michael's Middlewich



welcomed Nicky Harris to their March meeting. Nicky is the Project Manager for Middlewich and District Food Bank which is based in Middlewich. She told us about how the Food Bank works and what their needs are. Branch members brought donations of food items.

They also admitted two new members Jean Clement and Claire Dutton (pictured

left with Nicky Harris.) Their admittance took place during the Family Service and it proved a bit too chaotic to record photographically at the conclusion of the service!

..... And from St Anne, Sale

Three new members are pictured (*right*) with Revd. Canon Alison Cox, Lynda Bywater, Lynda Ronan, and Elaine Thompson.



Long service awards in Oxton St Saviour

Oxton St Saviour have recently been calculating the lengths of service to Mothers' Union of several of their members.

Adding up that of three of members alone, it was found that between them they had achieved at total; of 155 years!

They are (*Right*)

Gwyneth Harrison (standing),
Doreen Lloyd (left) and Gwyn McCabe



Five other members also received long service certificates, (*above*)
from the left

Pauline Jones, Jean Skillicorn (Both 30years), Pam Robinson (30 years) Margaret Foster and Judy Ford (both 40 years)

A great achievement from just one Branch! Ed

Congratulations to :-

Golden Weddings

St George Altrincham

Sandy and John Sadler

Helen and John Brundrett

Janice and Peter Ripley

Diamond Weddings St George Altrincham

6th January Francis and Harold Wright

Diary Dates 2023

20th April	Office re-opens after Easter break
1st June—20th June	Office Closed
1st July	AGM & Diocesan Council—Hartford 10am—2pm
27th July	Office Closes for Summer Break
9th August	Mary Sumner Day
5th September	Office re-opens after Summer break
22nd September	Annual Gathering at York Barbican
4th November	Diocesan Council—Hartford 10 am—2 pm
21st December	Office Closes for Christmas break

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By 7th July

An important reminder from our Secretary, Dawn



As announced at Diocesan Council in November our physical office in Chester will close this year. Once the details have been worked out, an exact closing date and alternative postal address will be circulated. Until such time please send post as normal to the office address.

I cannot sign for letters or parcels so please don't use "signed for" or "special delivery" services.

To make a difference in someone's life, you don't have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful or perfect. You just have to care.