



M.U.C.H.

SUMMER 2016

For people in the Rochester Diocese and beyond who care about family life.



Christian care for families

familiesfirst

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

From *Heather*

You will all know by now that this is a momentous year for our Mothers Union worldwide as we celebrate our 140th Anniversary. Let's make the most of it to forge ahead with renewed interest, commitment and vigour. We have a marvellous programme this year which culminates in the General Council which is to be held in WINCHESTER, where Mothers' Union began all those years ago. A massive celebration is to be held in the cathedral there at which our Archbishop, Justin Welby, will be the preacher, and on following day, Friday 23rd September, the huge council will be at Basingstoke nearby. We will be taking a party from Rochester diocese and so please remember this whole occasion in your prayers and be part of it in spirit. Shortly, I will print Justin Welby's words to the MU on the commissioning of our new Worldwide Tembey. It is good to have such course, our own Queen is also our congratulations and best wishes Diocese to her majesty on her 90th



occasion of the President, Lynne support and of patron. We have sent from the Rochester birthday.

There is a lot of reading to do in our issue this time and in this important year so have plenty of coffee to hand!

First. the recommissioning of our worldwide President, Lynne Tembey and the encouraging words spoken on that occasion by our Archbishop, Justin Welby, who will also be our preacher at the Winchester General Council celebration in September. He said;

"Caroline and I have seen the Mothers' Union in so many places, over so much work and it is utterly the opposite of everything which it is caricatured to be in this country. It is wonderful, joyful and effective and transforming and evangelistic – everything that is a delight in our lives and makes such a difference around the world in the churches in which it works

The Mothers' Union in so many places is an organisation which listens to the voice of weeping. Whether it's in Burundi, the Congo or South Sudan; whether it's in homes in cities where, when the local football team loses there is a 50% increase in domestic violence; whether it is in the loneliness of weeping by people who are not suffering physically but are spiritually empty and lost; it is the Mothers' Union that exists in the vision of Mary Sumner to speak of those things which God has provided that bring hope, help and a future.

There has never been a time when the family was not a place that needed the light of Christ shining within it to become what God has called it to be. And you hold that treasure in your hands. You are one of the greatest of women's groups in the world and you have the treasure of the gospel of reconciliation. What more could be needed to be transforming of the world in which we live"



AND NOWa message from our own new Diocesan President, Julia, who was commissioned at a wonderful service in April, together with other officers, for the next three years.

"Although what constitutes family can be very diverse today, the need to support each other and encourage one another in our faith journey remains as true today as when Mary Sumner started the Mothers' Union so many years ago. Our children still need to be 'trained up' in the lessons of faith in order to encourage and sustain them in their life's journeys.

As Mothers' Union members and Christians, we face many challenges to living out our faith in a world which sometimes feels full of scepticism and scorn for traditional Christian values. However, when we continue to reach out in faith, miracles do happen. How fitting that our Mothers Union theme for 2016 is "celebrating our faith" – putting our faith at the forefront of all we do for all to see.

Let us be encouraged then as we celebrate this our anniversary year. Let us look backwards with thankfulness and forward in hope as we seek new ways to be a member and support families as we have done since 1876.

(Thanks to the MU Rochester Diocesan newsletter for these two inspirational pieces.)

ONE WAY TO BE A MEMBER OF THIS GREAT ORGANISATION IS BY BELONGING TO OUR E-CLUB – MUCH. If you are reading this now you will already be on my list to receive the quarterly magazine which tries to keep our members in touch with all that is going on both in our diocese of Rochester and the wider world. Please try and make this year and this triennial a time when you join in more and commit your membership by coming along to some of the events which are being held throughout the year. Some dates to note. All members welcome to any of these.

**Saturday 14 MAY from 1000-1500 at Bromley & Shepherd's College.
Contact Karen Forster-Pearce on 01732 451 396**

9 August. Mary Sumner Day when there will be locally arranged pilgrimages concluding with evensong at the cathedral at 5.30pm. For details of your nearest branch please contact Liz Carter, our administrator on 0208 467 8155 or by email administrator@rochestermothersunion.co.uk

22 September Annual General Meeting Service at Winchester Cathedral

23 September Annual General Meeting at Hampshire Court Hotel, Basingstoke.

**29 October Autumn members' meeting at
Mathematical School**

Rochester

***FINALLY – a day for MUCH members and friends.
and homemade bring and buy sale at 3 Deanery
the cathedral) on Saturday 23 July from 1000 to***



***Coffee morning
Gate (adjacent to
1200. Do come***

and sample the delights of my new home and lovely garden and, as a by-product, we will raise a little money for the AWAY FROM IT ALL scheme.



Help Us End Gender-based Violence

For us every day is Mother's Day. Every Sunday is Mothering Sunday. We work with mothers and their families facing some of the most challenging situations imaginable.

One campaign that is close to our hearts is our work to end gender-based violence. Around the world our members speak out on this issue – from sensitively educating small local communities to ending social norms which have made violence normal and accepted, to challenging global governments to work to end gender-based violence by using our voice as a representative at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

In South Ankole, Uganda, Mothers' Union undertook a programme of community engagement, marriage counselling and radio talk shows to raise awareness of and tackle high domestic violence rates. As a result the number of cases of domestic violence reported in the area has dramatically reduced.

Mothers' Union have also established counselling and practical support for women sexually abused as a result of civil conflict. In DR Congo thousands of women have been victims of violent sexual abuse and rape. Women are taken from their homes and enslaved for up to a year. When they return home they face stigma in addition to the trauma they've already faced. Women also face problems of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and early marriage. Mothers' Union works in partnership with UFPPS (Union des Femmes pour la Paix et la Promotion Sociale) to support 200 survivors of gender-based violence. Small groups of GBV survivors learn new skills and gain strength through meeting women in similar situations. They are helped with counselling and reintegrated into society through prayer and practical support. Income generation skills, for example are a vital part of the teaching in groups: these mums need to be able to support themselves and to meet the needs of their children. The ability to be financially independent also protects women from prostitution. See more at: <http://www.mothersunion.org/help-us-end-gender-based-violence#sthash.eQxMIQwk.dpuf>

JUST TO REMIND OURSELVES..... we are a 4 million-strong worldwide organisation. Part of our commitment is to know about and pray for our overseas' links – Rochester diocese is linked with the following and we pray for these especially in July during the Wave of Prayer.

Chhattisgarh – India – North India



Chhattisgarh

The Church of North India is an ecumenical Church uniting Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.

The Women’s Fellowship for Christian Service in the Church of North India are affiliated to the global MU. The state produces 15% of the steel produced in the country, but 80% live in rural areas, with a standard of living below the national average, and the standard of health and sanitation is one of the lowest in the country. Pray for the Women’s Fellowship as they run projects to address the issues in the area, and particularly as they minister to the sick, broken families and the elderly, and raise children with Christian teaching.



Toliara – Madagascar – Indian Ocean



MU President Mrs Jaqueline Ravelomanantsoa

MU Contact and Co-ordinator Mrs Mamy

Toliara

Toliara has only been a diocese since 2013 but MU has been in existence in the area for much longer. A political crisis has taken a heavy toll on the economy and vulnerable people. 92% of the people live on less than \$2 a day. Please pray for the MU members working to promote marriage, registering children, and their project to provide birth certificates for all, a document needed to enter many fields. Pray also for increased literacy skills for all women, and an end to the political unrest

Mbale – Uganda – Uganda



MU President Mrs Biirah Muyonga

Mbale

Mbale was one of the diocese in Uganda where the Family Life Programme was launched in 2004 and has produced strong local communities. The programme has continues to grow and develop and recently has become “Eagle” including elements of the Church and Community Mobilisation Process. Please thank God for this work and pray that this work will continue to strengthen the work in this diocese. MU have a number of projects up and running and plans for 3 more in the future. Pray for them as they address 450 school girls to equip them with Lifeskills and safety as they visit 750 men and women in the local prison.



Zaria – Nigeria – Nigeria



MU President Mrs Hannah Bello - the wife of the bishop and a 66 year old retired nurse and midwife

Zaira

Please pray for the MU in Zaria, which is in a predominantly Muslim area which is a challenge for the Christians, with attacks from the extremist group Boko Haram in recent years. The area is 90% rural with most of the members in these areas. When it is the rainy season travel is impossible, so visits and meetings are restricted to the dry season. The members are involved in promoting family life and various building projects eg schools and clinics. Please pray also for the Womens' Guild for women not married in church.

Ndokwa – Nigeria – Nigeria



MU President Mrs Joy Ifunanya – the wife of the bishop.

Please pray for the MU in Ndokwa. The area has the challenges of much poverty, poor roads and lack of basic amenities such as water and electricity. They have 150 members who are very active visiting the sick, widows and orphans and evangelising. Pray also for a good working relationship with the Women's Guild and young girls.

FINALLY – in this special year we salute our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen.

She has approved prayers written for the celebration of her 90th Birthday ;Two prayers (or Collects) have been published in traditional and modern forms. The prayers are primarily intended for use in services marking the national celebrations in April and June. In addition two graces have been published for use as thanksgivings at the start of other celebrations such as street parties.

The Bishop of Exeter, Robert Atwell, who chairs the Liturgical Commission which prepares liturgy for the Church said: "The Queen has steered Britain through some challenging and difficult times over the past seven decades, providing the country with stability and wisdom. She is an inspiration to many people, young and old. The Queen's 90th birthday gives an opportunity not only to thank God for her service, but to celebrate the gifts of all older people in our society."

One of the graces reflects the words used in The Queen's first Christmas broadcast in 1952, a year in which her father, George VI died and at the end of which she was looking forward to her Coronation, the following year.

Full text of the prayers

Collects:

Heavenly Father, who hast brought our gracious sovereign Queen Elizabeth to the completion of her ninetieth year, and dost gather her people in celebration of the same: grant that we, rejoicing before thee with thankful hearts, may ever be united in love and service to one another, and her kingdom flourish in prosperity and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Heavenly Father,
as we celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Her Majesty the Queen,
receive our heartfelt thanks
for all that you have given her in these ninety years
and for all that she has given to her people.
Continue, we pray, your loving purposes in her,
and as you gather us together in celebration,
unite us also in love and service to one another;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Graces:

*Bountiful God, giver of all good gifts,
we give thanks for the many years and long reign of our Queen;
Bless our food, our neighbourhood,
and our enjoyment of each other's company.
Help us to learn from Queen Elizabeth's commitment to her people,
so that our community may be strengthened
and all may flourish.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, the King of love.*

*Gracious God, give our Queen continued wisdom and strength
to carry out the promises she has made;
and bless (this food, and) those who are gathered here,
that, sustained by service for others,
we may faithfully serve you, all the days of our life.*

[With words from The Queen's First Christmas Broadcast, 1952]



Any of the following people will be more than happy to help you find information or tell you what you need to know about any of the topics we cover in MUCH. Please do not hesitate to make contact with us.

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