

E-Newsletter No. 25 – July 2020*To unsubscribe contact elizabeth@benton.org.uk*

Dear Friends

I wonder how you are all faring? Have you ventured out yet or met up with your family or friends and neighbours at all? Or are you still very anxious about going out and meeting people even at a distance? I hope if you are worried and fearful you have someone who can help you through it. Please remember your MU friends are here for you. Don't suffer on your own at home. Get in touch.

I can't say when we might be able to arrange any events or meetings. A lot will depend on the size of the venue any meeting takes place and availability of the dreaded sanitiser and many other factors. The opening of our churches is beginning but again for many with restricted numbers, no singing – so much a part of our worship, no socialising after again part of our fellowship. Will we feel safe going and how many will be allowed in each church? All questions still to be answered. Some churches are thinking about continuing to show their services on-line and I think many may continue in taking part in that way too. It seems many more have viewed these services that are ever seen in the pews.

I was struck by something I read recently about trauma

"Trauma ... is being confronted with more stimuli (or information) than we are able to process or digest. In a way it is like being in a car crash that is happening in slow motion, the trauma is unfolding but we have no idea if we will only be bruised by the inevitable brutality, or if we will be seriously injured or killed. The stress of not knowing something so critical is too much for us to manage, it is too much to process. So we mobilise our defences, for some it is denial, for others control. For me, it is compartmentalising. We all have different coping mechanisms."

One of the most helpful things that has come out of Covid-19 has been the work of the www.tragedyandcongregations.org.uk in mapping the phases in the trauma we are living through them.

There are three phases: the heroic phase, Disillusionment and finally rebuilding.

Father Damian Howard of the Jesuits highlights three opportunities for the Church as we come out of lockdown:

"Helping people slow down, to become more contemplative, to become once again capable of appreciating symbols, which is an essential pre-condition for living a sacramental life.

Welcoming people into a life that is more local, more connected with family and with the earth - and, paradoxically, more connected with people in other parts of our interconnected globe. A new localism would be wonderful news for parishes.

Venturing out into some of those dark corners of our society. That will be challenging. It will require courage and, more importantly, communities of discernment who hear God's call to go out, to take a risk. "

But life is slowly resuming the new normal – at least for the moment. So we must make the most of it even if we are to be masked. Mary Sumner house has invited members to make masks to sell in the MUE shop. They will be available at the end of July at a cost of £6. £5 of it will be returned to the diocese who made it to help with their fundraising. Scotland has been asked to make 55 in all and one or two in our diocese are beavering away making them. So thank you to all the sewers.

Christmas cards and diaries are now available to order too. I am willing to order for anyone who wishes and if it can be done via your branch leader that would be easiest as MSH are willing to mail out orders to more local addresses knowing that we are not seeing each other. They are also reducing the postage for individual orders to £1.99 or free for



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orders over £30. These helpful changes will last until 1st October. Eth cards can be seen on line already and hopefully flyers will be coming soon. I will try to scan it and e-mail it to you all and perhaps you can pass it on to those who are not on e-mail.

In the E-news I received from MSH recently they told us their appeal has raised £750,000 thus far. They are immensely grateful to all who have contributed and sent notes of encouragement.

Please continue to take care of each other, pray for each

other and the work of the Mothers' Union. MSH is as busy as ever with many many Zoom meetings taking place around the world between leaders and members, connections often better between those in Africa than in this country!

With my love and prayers

Sarah

Staying connected through midday prayers



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Our UK members who don't have access to the internet at home will still be able to hear our midday prayers thanks to the

Church of England's Daily Hope line. Just call 0800 804 8044 from a UK mobile or landline and press option 4, then option 8. We are of course still running midday prayers Monday - Saturday on our public [Facebook page](#). Thousands of you have viewed these already, but for those interested and not aware, feel free to watch and comment.

Please remember to share the following sign-up link with anyone you think may be interested in receiving this newsletter: bit.ly/mothersunionemails

You can subscribe to our YouTube channel to receive our updates and video content: bit.ly/mothersunionyoutube

Thank You Key Workers Appeal

There has been an outpouring of compassion during the pandemic, particularly for those on the front lines, our key workers. We are very aware that often because of their personal sacrifices quality family time has not always been possible. That is why we have launched our Thank You Key Workers Appeal.

This will help provide a range of day trips and short breaks for families of key workers in the UK to help rebuild connections and togetherness, especially for those who have been kept apart or who are on low incomes - families who would generally be unable to have experiences like this.

Read more about it on the MU website.



THE LATEST NEWSLETTER FROM JENNY



Dear Friends

I do hope you are still coping well with all the challenges we have been given over the last four months. I trust that many of you will now be able to move about more freely, perhaps spending time with members of your family, if not in their home then at least outside.

As we move into the second half of the year I am reminded that this is the holiday season for a lot of people, especially families. This time of year brings back many memories for me of times spent driving to the seaside with my parents and my younger sister. For several years during the 1950s we travelled to the same place, Walton on the Naze, at that time my family lived in Bedfordshire and my Father would only drive to the east coast because he would not drive through London, [if he wouldn't do so then he certainly wouldn't do so now]. These were simple days, staying in an hotel, playing together on the beach during the day and playing miniature golf in the early evening. But are not the simple things in life the most rewarding?

The time spent sharing a cup of tea with a friend, or walking in the garden or park where nature shows us the glory of God, listening to bird song, which seems much clearer without all the traffic, reading a good book or listening to a piece of music which lifts the soul. I do hope that it won't be long before we are able to take part in more of the simple things in life. Being able to worship together in church, meeting with our MU friends and hugging our children and grandchildren.

I live alone and one of the things I miss most is not being able to hug and be hugged in return. So let's hang on to those simple things and give thanks to our heavenly Father for all his gifts both great and small then, as it says in verse four of, *God is working his purpose out. March we forth in the strength of God, his banner is unfurled; let the light of the gospel shine in the darkness of the world: strengthen the weary, heal the sick and set ev'ry captive free, that the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.*

Please continue to pray into all the many situations happening now, including praying for the MU, and if you are able, do join in with midday prayers on Facebook or check the MU website for help with other ways to support the organisation and the many people we all seek to serve.

Love & Prayers

Jenny

Jenny is a Trustee and writes these lovely meditations for

the Indoor Membership – but isn't that what we all are at the moment!

And here's a prayer from her...

Father, we thank you for all your gifts both great and small, thank you for upholding us during this time, help us to appreciate the little things in life.

We pray for the members of the Mothers' Union as we continue to work together, supporting one another. We ask your blessing on the members of staff and the Worldwide Trustee Board and its sub - committees working to ensure the safe passage of the charity through these challenging times.

We ask in the name of Jesus, our Saviour AMEN

RESOURCES

Mothers' Union has a number of resources to offer support in these challenging times. These resources are available here.

The Scottish Episcopal Church website offers resources for all to participate from home.

The website gives news and events in the Diocese and there is an option to subscribe to the e-newsletter on this website.

As part of the ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) will broadcast video coverage of eucharistic services via its website, social media channels and YouTube channel. The webpage for the broadcast is located here. For example, my church Holy Trinity Church, Dunfermline invites you to follow along their live services by heading to their Facebook page at 11:00 am on a Sunday and 10:15 am on a Thursday. After services end their videos are added to their website and their YouTube channel for you to watch and take part in worship at a time to suit you. As part of Holy Trinity reaching out to as many people as possible, we now have the ability to place our online content on to DVDs. If you, or someone you know, would like access to a DVD copy these can be posted out free of charge. Please e-mail Fiona Barcroft (fionabarcroft.ht@gmail.com) if you would like access to a DVD.

This NHS website gives the latest public health advice on Covid-19.

Social Concerns

May I invite you to select one or more of the topics below to include in your prayers? The links will give you additional information on that topic.

Following the death of George Floyd in the USA, there has been much coverage on our TV screens of reactions to his death and, by extension, to the 'Black Lives

Matter' movement. To read the College of Bishops statement on slavery and racism go to the SEC website.

The high number of deaths in the UK from Covid-19 has generated considerable media coverage of the distressing manner of some of those deaths together with a renewed call from some for assisted suicide to become legal. When this topic was last discussed by a sub-committee of Synod, here are the views they expressed on End of Life Assistance: Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill. You may also wish to consider The Art of Dying Well.

Despite the financial lifeline thrown by the recent furlough scheme, many of us have become distressed by the high levels of poverty in the UK, as shown by the But Foodbanks offer more than food; food banks can help people break free from poverty by providing additional support to help people resolve the crises that they face. And where there is need, we often see Mothers' Union membership in action. Finally, here, members of the Scottish Episcopal Church express views on social justice and poverty.

Isabelle Pottinger

LOCKDOWN – A TIME OF DISCOVERY

What have you discovered during lockdown? It has been a time of change for everyone and the first thing I noticed was how quiet it had become. No traffic, no people walking along the road. I was pleased that I didn't have to go out as I had just had a nasty fall, bashed my face, broken my glasses and damaged my wrists. I found plenty to eat in the fridge and cupboard and discovered just how far a tin of corned beef could go! I soon discovered how kind my neighbours were for getting messages and very soon there were lots of people walking dogs, cycling and running along the road and a lovely group of Strathmore Avenue mums offering help of all kinds

I was very concerned about my two sisters who had both been in hospital over Christmas and were still not well although now at home but I could no longer visit them. Well I soon discovered that they too were getting neighbourly help and deliveries and were fine. The phone was very busy. I found such a great help from phone calls from members of the congregation and of course from my sons in New Zealand and Panama and John in Edinburgh became the main bringer of my shopping as I couldn't get on to delivery from supermarkets.

I am lucky to have a garden to sit in and the weather was warm so I took short walks to the river where the rockery garden there is always lovely and everyone says hello as you pass. The optician delivered my glasses to the door which was amazing and I could read again. My walks extended to the church grounds where I found a peaceful place to sit.

I discovered that I could get Mothers Union midday prayers on Facebook and joined members from all over the world for prayers. It was good to hear from Helen from our MU group and Ann from the craft group phoning up to hear if all was well. Nerys phones too and send weekly news and a lovely service for Sunday with readings by familiar voices.

We all go through hard times in life, times of loss that prepare us for something new. I have discovered that it is not loss of independence that I should worry about because we are all dependent on other people all through life.

It is gratifying to know and accept all the good things that are being done during this time of discovery and I truly thank God for all that .

Sheila Redwood

CORVID FACE MASKS

MU has decided to make masks and sell them in the MU shop. I know some members may have been making some for themselves or friends and neighbours but we have been asked if any member is willing to make some. Each province is going to given a certain number to make I think depending on how many members are able and willing to make them.



If you would like to be part of this effort then please e-mail Deborah Munday the Moray Ross and Caithness DP and our with Scottish link with MSH -

This Photo by Unknown Author is deborah.l.munday@gmail.com

You will be given the pattern and instructions so you can get started shortly.

Thank you for your help. They will be available for sale they hope by the end of the month from the MUE shop.

Sarah

NERYS WRITES

A few weeks ago a local photographer came into our church building to take some pictures for a book he hopes to produce of Dunblane in Lockdown. I tried to recreate for him what it is like to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday, worshiping in an empty building but together with congregations in their homes.

As I blew out the altar candles at the end of the session, one of them was smoking so I jokingly suggested he should take some more photos. A few days later I



received an excited message saying that in one of those images he could see the shape of an angel with wings spread hovering above the candle.

I don't know what kind of shape you think an angel would have. They have appeared in many different forms in various religious traditions and in religious art down the centuries from fearsome and fantastical figures to cute cherubs. Many people today are fascinated by angels. Some believe that they have their own personal angel guarding over them which they can sense close by in times of trouble. For me, however, angels often have human forms. The word 'Angel' comes from the Greek word for 'messenger', so an angel is someone who is sent on an errand by God. In the Bible, it is sometimes impossible to tell whether an angelic messenger is a supernatural being or a person doing God's bidding. And although they do sometimes provide comfort, in my experience, they are also sent to guide, challenge, encourage or sustain as Ann Lewin's poem reminds us

Flames of fire, shafts of illumination;
disconcerting messengers of God;
assuring a woman that she can give birth,
telling a man that what she bears is
gift from God; challenging us to
look, and not seek life where only death
is found; opening doors, surrounding us with
care, surprising us into fresh understanding.

An awareness of the possibility of angels can open our minds to a cosmos which is full of the glory of God. In the words of Jane Williams, whose little book *Angels* I recommend,

'Behind, around, underneath and through the day-to-

day a world that we inhabit is the song of the angels. It is beautiful, endless, joyful and terrible. It will be sung whether we join in with it or not, but imagine the sensation of stepping into that angelic harmony and being caught up in its power and majesty. This is what the angels invite us to do. They long to teach us their song, so that we, with them, can sing a hymn of praise to the glorious universe and its maker.'

I would be delighted to hear of your experiences of angels or how you think of them. Please feel free to get in touch.

With love and blessings,

Nery

MARY SUMNER DAY Aug 9th 2020



Mary Sumner's portrait, drawn before her marriage to George that hangs in the Drawing Room of Old Arlesford Place in Hampshire, where in 1876 the first meeting of the Mothers Union took place.

The Rectory at Old Arlesford which was their home and where their three children were born and raised.



Perhaps the first picture ever of a Mothers' Union

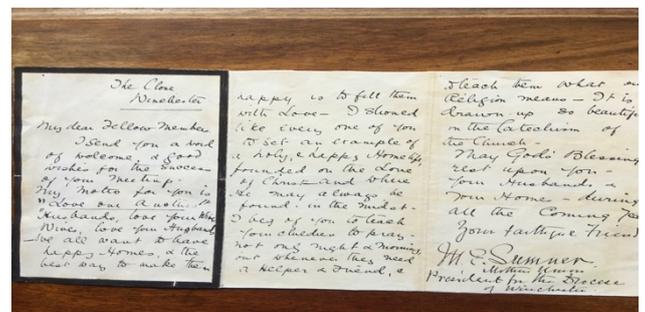
branch, taken on the doorstep of a house further up the road



These women were old before their time....



Mary and George with their three children, taken in the garden of No 1 the Close Winchester to celebrate their Golden Wedding in 1898. It remained her home



till she died on Aug 9th 1921

