

Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane with Diocese of Brechin

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CORNTON VALE

Lockdown may have been with us for a good part of the year, but the work of the prison goes on. At present the number of prisoners is about seventy, give or take. Throughout the year we have continued with our usual collecting, all of it calculated to give the prisoners back their human dignity. They may have lost their freedom, but they certainly should not lose their human dignity.

The new prison is in process of being built so to a certain extent the prisoners are living on a building site (when builders have been allowed to work during this year that is!). Not a comfortable way to be.

In the course of the year we have sent them fifty pairs of pants of all shapes and sizes, so that as the prisoners come from the court, with nothing but the clothes they stand up in, they can have pants they can wash each day, until friends or relatives can bring in their own clothes. That's an ongoing commitment, so please keep them coming.

Then there are Handbags for Hope, and we've supplied an amazing eighty-five of them, and twelve purses; we had a substantial gift from one of the Church of Scotland Guilds a group Jean Richardson visited some years ago who were so impressed with the work we were doing they have been supporting us ever since. We take any size, both large and small, as they replace the plastic bin bags the prison gives to prisoners who are being released to put their belongings in. When they come to the Hub to collect their handbags they are also given some toiletries, we collected 48 lots of toiletries, 10 face cloths, to start them off, so to speak, and for these we do not have the restrictions we used to have when we collected toiletries for Christmas gifts, which were going into the prison. We also gave 11prs of tights, again for prisoners being released.

A new thing this year has been bath towels, we discovered that a prisoner released into homeless accommodation, didn't have a towel, and had no money to buy one, so had ended up drying herself with paper towels. Where's the human dignity in that? It must be hard enough to know that neither your family nor your friends were prepared to take you in whilst you found your feet, to then end up having to dry yourself with paper towels must destroy any shred of self-worth you may have

managed to hang on too. So, this year forty bath towels went to the prison too.

Oddments are 13 general greeting cards and two pairs of bed socks!

This year Christmas gifts were arranged differently. Because of the pandemic we collected money and I went on a massive shopping spree! Each prisoner received, a card, handwritten by the Dunblane MU, an adult colouring book, a pack of socks, a beauty face pack, and a poke of chocolates. We also bought sets of pens and felt tips, but the prisoners couldn't get them personally, as they have to be supervised when they have anything which could be used as a weapon.

So all in all we have had a very productive year, despite the pandemic, at one point my spare bedroom floor was completely covered with things waiting to go to the prison.

Jeanette Allan

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 5, then option 9.

[Follow this link to our Midday Prayers.](#)

We are 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

THE MAY REFLECTION FROM JENNY



My Dear Friends, I have been considering a lot of things since I last wrote in March. April contained so many different occasions, some happy like Easter and the opening up of more of the UK to enable us to begin to come together more freely once again. Some sad like the death of The Duke of Edinburgh and my friend of 60 years, both will be sorely missed by those who held them dear.

But now as we enter May we have other things to occupy our thoughts. 1st of May, now known as May Day, used to be called Labour Day, I am sure some people may still think of it that way. Before I moved to Wales the village where I went to church used to hold a big medieval festival on the 1st May, with many stalls and side shows, including children from the local school entertaining us with maypole dancing, a great way of bringing the community together. On 13th we will hopefully all be able to join with other members of our church family for Ascension Day. Then on the 23rd May we celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit



which filled the lives of the disciples enabling them to tell of God's love. I pray that we too may so be filled so that we are able to follow their example, speaking freely to those we meet on our journey of faith.

At the end of the month, we have Spring Bank Holiday, when once more our children and grandchildren will be away from school and this year, we may be able to get together outside to share fellowship.

We need to give thanks for the drop in the number of cases of Covid in the UK, however in other parts of the world this is not the case and many are still seriously ill or dying, so we may wish to spend some time thinking about our members in these countries as we celebrate the changes in our own.

But for us in MU May has brought us a new way to keep in touch, our new member magazine 'Connected' what an interesting and informative read it is, bringing us stories of Mothers' Union around the world making a difference in these

difficult times. On page 23 we are reminded that, "Mothers' Union cannot afford to stand still", how true that is and I am sure that all of us would agree, we are a progressive organisation, following in Mary Sumner's footsteps. Remember how progressive she was when back in the mid 1800s she brought together people from different walks of life to work for a common cause, bringing more and more hope and confidence to those she set out to serve.

One thing I really like about May are the lighter nights, I find it hard to cope with dark mornings and closing the curtains at 4pm in the afternoon. Now, with the warmer weather coming and the days lengthening we can all be out in our gardens or the local park or sitting on a balcony enjoying God's creation. But don't forget to keep creating those much needed items for our hospitals, care homes and prisons. If you are not able to share in the knitting and sewing then please don't forget to do the most important thing of all, PRAY, prayer is, and always has been what underpins all our work as MU members "Sometimes praying can be really hard, but God appreciates all our efforts", says Catherine Kyte, Faith Development adviser at MSH. You will find lots of ideas to help you with prayer on the MU website. If you don't have access to the website there will be someone you know who will, so please ask for help.

Love & Prayers

Jenny

So, as we look back and give thanks to our risen Lord for all His care, let us look forward and ask for His continued guidance using the prayer given to us from our worldwide President, Sheran Harper.

A prayer for rebuilding hope and confidence

We will walk in hope and confidence, trusting each other, loving each other - and together we will rebuild the hope and confidence of families and communities everywhere - always reaching forward as God's hands and feet and reflecting a life filled with purpose and meaning, grace and love, peace and joy. AMEN

A LETTER FROM OUR LEADER!

Dear friends

Thank you to those of you who have made "squares" for our Coming Together project. Those we have received have been wonderful with some interesting stories about how they came about. It's not too late if you are still in the throes of making

one or would now like to. We hope to be able to have a display of them on Mary Sumner Day.

I have booked St John's Perth for **Mary Sumner Day** in the hope that we will be able to come together so please put 9th August in your diaries – albeit in pencil. This year MSH is celebrating 145 years since MU started and there will be 31 days of “**Counting your Blessings**” in August.

By the time you are reading this the Thy Kingdom Come service will have taken place. I hope those of you who were able to view it did so and were inspired by it. There is an ever-increasing need for God's love and peace to surround us in these, for many, still difficult times. There is still an anxiety for many people of going out freely; children still finding it hard to catch up on their lives, businesses trying to pick up the threads and become viable and many other areas of adjustment to be made. The challenges are different for each of us no matter our age or circumstances.

Once again this year the **Annual Gathering** will take place on line in September I don't think I have the date yet but I'm sure it will be worth joining in for. There is to be another global day on 27th November during the 16 days of Activism– look out for further details when they are available for both these events.

Our **Diocesan Annual meeting** is in the diary for **Saturday 18th September** so please put this date in your diary too. The meeting is open to all members and we will hopefully be able to hold in person.

The Trustees have still to make a final decision about the **Charity Shop** this year. So far we have not heard when it is opening but we will make a final decision at our next meeting early in June. Please let me know your opinions on whether we should run it this year to help us make our decision.

So a lot is planned and I hope some of you will feel able to join in some of the events. It will be so good to meet up again in person.

Perhaps too we can now look forward to meeting up with our families again and even giving them a hug; plan holidays; resume classes and holding our MU meetings.

As you know this year is **Election year** being the end of the triennium. Sadly for various reason many of your Trustees are standing down including Liz our treasurer. They have served faithfully and I am grateful for their time and contributions as your trustees. So please pray earnestly for new Trustees to come forwards and don't be shy if you feel you might be one of those people. Without a treasurer we cannot continue. Irene Rose is willing to stand

again for a further three years. I too have come to the end of my three years as DP. (At this moment I cannot say if I will/can stand again for a further three years.) But we need preferably 4 new Trustees and a treasurer. In due course I will send out nomination forms, and we do want and indeed need members to come forward and be willing to stand.

The nomination procedure for Provincial President and Zonal Trustee for the next three years has also started. More information about this and nomination forms are available on the MU Scotland website.

I hope we will be able to start our meetings again soon and reinforce our support for each other. I know many of you have been keeping in touch in small groups and even meeting in gardens – well wrapped up – but my prayer is that we will grow in confidence to pick up our lives and go out and tell everyone what marvellous work the MU does in small ways and big.

This last year or even 15 months has been hard for so many in different ways and some will have reassessed their lives and what they do. Good and bad will have come from our time spent at home but we can pray that the way forwards will be in God's hands and he will show us the way.

With my love and prayers

Sarah



A PRAYER FROM BRF

*Speak to us Lord,
between rest and work,
between work and sleep,
between busyness and silence,
between silence and words,
between getting ready and going out,
between coming home and settling down,
that from these spaces in our lives
we might grow into fullness of life,
every moment of our days.
Amen*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

For the first time in many a month there are some dates for your diaries, which is a real step forward and back to reality!

Cathedral Prayers happens on the second Tuesday of each month unless notified to the contrary. It is a quiet half hour of prayers, readings and intercessions led by various members. At the moment we continue to follow the service from our own homes and even though we are not meeting in St Ninian's, the service is sent out on line, so we can still gather together and pray and reflect as a corporate body.

Please remember in your prayers the problems being faced by our members in Myanmar, and especially pray for our Wave of Prayer link of Sitwee, and Bishop James, his staff, his churches and their members. Pray too that the ethnic violence may cease within that beautiful country. A friend who has a contact there sent me the following message.. *Apparently Police pick on people, take their address and look at Face book and if they find anything has been posted about the military or situation they are arrested and taken away. I had noticed Ye Min's postings are all about literature and teaching so this is obviously why.*

A thought shared with us: "worries are really unarticulated prayers. So put words to your worries and send them heavenwards. Make yourself talk them out in the presence of love. Notice the promise Paul makes: "Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6)

Mary Sumner Day Aug 9th St John's Perth Further details to follow.

Count Your Blessings Aug 1st – 31st. Celebrating 145 years of the Mothers' Union.

Diocesan Annual Meeting Sept 18th St John's Church Perth.

OUR CHAPLAIN WRITES...

What I would like to share is a poem-prayer by Louise Gough which expresses my heart's desire at this time when so many of us are still stuck in the habits and behaviours we have learned during this last year - stuck in loneliness and isolation, stuck

in sadness at the losses we have sustained, stuck in dull routine because of anxiety or low self-esteem. Jesus's disciples were stuck too in the days that led to Pentecost. They were stuck because they didn't know what to do, stuck in that room because it felt dangerous to go out. Stuck because they felt alone. They were stuck remembering all the good times they had had with Jesus but couldn't see how they were ever going to feel happy again. It took the Spirit of God appearing like wind and flames to unstuck them, to drive them out into the crowd on the street, to help them dream new dreams and see new visions and hope into the future. My prayer is that the same Spirit will unstuck us in the days and weeks to come.

*Wild Spirit of God,
come refresh and restore us!
Blow through our tiredness,
disturb our dull routines,
awaken our expectations,
alert us to your presence,
excite our faith,
until the fire of our love
takes hold in us again,
and your Pentecost light
warms every heart
and draws others to you,
the source of all life and joy.*

Amen

With my love and prayers, Nerys

Sunday May 23th is Pentecost – 50 days after Easter, and marks the coming of the Holy Spirit.



The Holy Spirit of Pentecost fire, life giving breath of the church, spirit of healing and forgiveness, source of resurrection and eternal life.

Christian Concern for Families
World-wide through
PRAYING – ENABLEING
– CAMPAIGNING

