

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

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### SARAH'S LETTER

#### *Dear Friends*

It feels as if Autumn is almost here now and for the last couple of evenings the large bright Harvest Moon has been coming up outside my window slowly making its way above the trees and sometimes covered for a few minutes by clouds.

I was reminded that our faith journey can be a little like this. At time it shines brightly undimmed and in full splendour, but at other times it may be dimmed by clouds either for long periods or just a few days. But it does always shine again. Like the moon it may wax and wane but we always know it is there and it will return again.

Unlike the moon which always seems to be alone in the sky we are not alone. We have company on our way through our friends, MU members, family and all those who pray for us, seen and unseen throughout the world and of course Jesus says he never leaves us. Do not be afraid to reach out for help even if we feel alone and far away from our faith Jesus and our friends are right beside us. But we may have to take that first, what feels like giant, step of asking. We mostly do not have the gift of reading each other's minds – a good thing probably.

My diary looks very much as if life is returning to what was normality with lots of entries and busy days and weeks. MU meetings, church meetings, medical appointments and so on as well as the odd meeting with friends. I hope for some of you too meeting up with friends is now becoming more possible and any anxiety is lessening. As we keep hearing we are probably going to have to learn to live with Covid as we do with flu, but maybe wearing masks now to help us feel a little safer whatever other people think. The booster vaccines will also help hopefully. They have already started I gather as my mother has hers next week.

I hope many of you will feel free to come to our council Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October at St John's Perth. We will be ensuring we stick to all the rules still in place and make the space as safe as possible for everyone and it will be so lovely to meet up again after all this time and catch up. I have been asked if you could let me know how many of you might come so that we can arrange the chairs accordingly. Doing this does not preclude you from deciding later you can come but it would help to start and mean less movement on the day.

So far, I am very sad that no one else has come forwards to take on the role of treasurer or become a

Trustees. I hope this will change soon so that MU can continue here in this diocese. We also need someone to become the liaison with Cornton Vale prison- not necessarily becoming a trustee as well - but continuing the work we do to support the women there with knickers, towels, bags, socks etc.

On a positive note I am very grateful to Wilma Dyer for agreeing to take over the prayer chain from Marjorie to whom immense thanks are due for communicating our requests for prayer to those who undertake to pray over the last ten years. It is such an essential part of being MU and supporting each other. I am also grateful to Jean Richardson who is taking over keeping in touch with our linked dioceses, another important role that helps us keep in touch worldwide.

At our Trustees meeting we decided to do the same as last year for Christmas presents for Cornton Vale and ask branches to donate money so that presents such as socks and colouring books can be purchased by one person and delivered there. So that this will overcome any problems of getting items to Jeanette or indeed having to visit the shops. I hope you agree with this decision.

Mothers' Union is also raising awareness of Domestic Violence during the 16 days of Activism as we have the last few years. The 27<sup>th</sup> November sees a global day with vigils planned and we are planning to hold one in Perth that day. The vigil is to start at 1.03pm for 3 minutes to represent the "No More 1 in 3". We are asking those who wish to, to join us and more details will follow in due course. I have written to Bishop Ian who has put the date in his diary and he hopes to join us.

Please take a minute to look at the list of dates later in this e-news and put them in your diaries

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you on 16<sup>th</sup> October and hope you are all keeping well and safe.

With my prayers

*Sarah*

### **SAFEGUARDING – who, what and why**

Hello, my name is Irene Rose and I recently took over as diocesan safeguarding trustee. I'd like to share some thoughts on safeguarding with you as it plays an important part in our work as the MU.

Safeguarding is really about taking care of and looking out for the vulnerable, both children and adults, and also for each other

This then leads to the question, who is responsible for safeguarding? All churches have a safeguarding officer as you may be aware. Within the Scottish Episcopal Church there is a provincial officer (as well as a deputy) for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. Within the MU there is a safeguarding committee who, over the past few months have been contacting all the Provinces and Dioceses in Britain and Ireland. They are proposing to include information about safeguarding in the next edition of the MU, Connected.

We are all responsible for each other and in our communities regarding the safeguarding of our vulnerable adults and children. There are many ways in which people are vulnerable to abuse, and with the growth of scams even more people are open to being taken advantage of financially. If we suspect that someone is being abused in any way, we should report it to the appropriate person within the church/organisation with as much information as possible.

We should do nothing other than that unless it is an emergency, in which case the police or social work services should be contacted. In the MU all of the dioceses should have a trustee responsible for safeguarding and in Scotland the laws relating to safeguarding are slightly different to those in the rest of Britain and Ireland. If you would like any further information regarding safeguarding please contact me at irenerose1314@outlook.com.

**Irene Rose**

## JENNY'S LETTER

*Sadly, this wasn't able to be included in our last Newsletter, so here it is, and it's still relevant.*

My dear friends, it is good to be able to write to you as once again we prepare to celebrate Mary Sumner Day. Mary Sumner House have many events planned on Face book and You Tube for August which I am sure some of you will be able to access. If not, hopefully you will have all received your 'Count Your Blessings' chart and will take part with other members in giving thanks to our heavenly Father for all His many blessings to us. I am sure you will agree that we have much to be thankful for, by no means least, the fact that here in the UK, we will once again be able to meet with a group of people who are not in our 'bubble' whether that is at home or for a cup of tea and a slice of cake in a café. It feels like life is beginning to return to something like normal.



August is of course holiday time but because of the difficulty of too much overseas travel my eldest daughter and I recently spent a few days visiting West Wales, a very rural and beautiful part of the UK. Our trip included visiting St David's, the smallest city, where we were able to take our first steps away from home

in a long time and walk with others in the footsteps of St David the Patron Saint of Wales. As a young man David became a monk and lived on a diet consisting mainly of bread and water as he went about performing miracles urging the people to 'do the little things' Throughout lockdown we did 'little things' we needed to keep in touch and help one another because it was important and we found many different ways to do so. If all we could do was make phone calls that was what we did, if we could do more we helped with shopping or collecting prescriptions. Now in memory of Mary Sumner we need to take the next step, for some that will be to continue to pray, perhaps in a more focused way, for others it may be possible to get to our first MU meeting and take part in an activity to raise money to support those who so desperately need our help, there is a big world out there and many people, are still suffering, not only because of the pandemic but because once again unrest is rife.

Unrest in South Africa, which started in July, still continues to disrupt the lives of many, including many of our MU members and their families, floods throughout Europe and heatwaves in Canada, all need our prayerful support. Using our 'Count Your Blessings' chart is only a little thing and will take up only a small part of each day, but if we all 'do the little things' each one will become a 'big thing' and that which our heavenly Father is calling

us to do will be achieved. Continuing to walk in the footsteps of others brings me to the words of the hymn by Sydney Carter, *one more step along the world I go*, particularly the verse which says 'Give me

courage when the world is rough, keep me loving when the world is tough, leap and sing in all I do, keep me travelling along with you.

We have all needed a lot of courage over the last 18 months or so but if we allow ourselves to follow in God's footsteps, he will give us that courage and allow us to keep going forward one step at a time. I pray you will be able to spend some time sharing with others this August, and if you are able to have even a little time away may He grant you peace and safe journeys

Taken from information from MSH on celebrating Mary Sumner Day



Loving Lord, we give you thanks for the far reaching vision of our founder, Mary Sumner.

We look back with gratitude and praise for her witness, and for all that has been achieved thus far in the name of Mothers' Union worldwide.

As we look forward with faith for all that is to come help us to build a future together which will enable our work to flourish; through far reaching vision and commitment to your will. Amen



### SCOTLAND - MALAWI LINK

Maybe you already know but there are strong ties between the Scottish Government and the country of Malawi. When I looked at the News and updates from Mary Sumner House, there was this picture of the boxes that were in a container, sent out each year by the Diocese of Birmingham.

The Diocese of Birmingham has been linked with the church in Malawi for over 50 years. When the link was formed there was only one diocese in Malawi but now there are four and Birmingham has kept the links with them all.

One of the ways in which the Diocese of Birmingham supports the connection is by sending an annual container of equipment and supplies to Malawi. Over the years this project has become about more than just sending supplies though. It has become a valuable community initiative in the UK and a way of strengthening links with members abroad.

When it works, it's a wonderful outreach, but sadly, some countries have such flexible rules that often



the goods never reach the people for which they are intended., so full marks to Birmingham!

### THE HELPFUL HOTEL

Early in August, before the Taliban took over in Kabul, members in Leeds discovered help was needed for quarantining Afghan families in hotels. A Manchester hotel manager who is the son of an MU member living in the Huddersfield Episcopal Area, became a contact for the Diocese of Leeds in their efforts to assist refugees

Now, working alongside Manchester Diocese MU, members from the Diocese of Leeds have sent outdoor toys and games for when the Afghan children have time to play. Recently, they were asked by their contact for warm coats for the children ready for when they leave quarantine and move on again.

Following this request, members across the Diocese of Leeds have worked very hard to collect hundreds of good quality coats. These have been taken to Manchester and received gratefully by the refugee families. The members have recently supplied other clothing, including harder to get items such as underwear for the children too.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Diocesan annual meeting **16<sup>th</sup> October** at St John's, threshold, Perth 10.00am for 10.30

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October** enrolment of new members. – Doris, Tamara, Hilary, and Aileen at Blairgowrie. Please pray for them

**16 Days of Activism 25 Nov – 10<sup>th</sup> Dec.** Global day with vigil on 27<sup>th</sup> at 1.03pm for 3 minutes in Perth – more details to follow.

Provincial Retreat **5-7<sup>th</sup> April 2022** at Kinnoull. If you booked for last year your booking carries over but still 10 spaces available. More details on MU Scotland website

Lady Day **24<sup>th</sup> March 2022** at St John's Perth (TBC)

**23/24 Sept 2022** MU Annual meeting in Belfast

Tuesday Prayers on **Oct 12<sup>th</sup>; Nov 9<sup>th</sup> and Dec 8<sup>th</sup>.**

We still might not be meeting in the Cathedral, but do take time that day at 11.30am to sit and pray with other members of the Mu in our dioceses the prayers that have been put together for our corporate use, and if you would like to take your turn in writing them one month, get in touch with Sarah Gammell

### SPEAKING UP

*A radio programme she heard at the beginning of this month has given our Chaplain Nerys pause for thought.*

As a young woman making my way in Academia, I had a secret fear of being seen as a chatterbox or as a bossy boots and disliked for it. Looking back I can

see how this worry often prevented me from sharing my ideas and giving my views at meetings or conferences even when I may have been the most knowledgeable or authoritative person in the room.

I didn't realise how common my experience was until I came across the work of Mary Ann Sieghart on a programme on Radio 4 a few weeks ago. The broadcaster and journalist took her listeners on a global journey to find out why women aren't speaking up in public and whether they are disproportionately side-lined and excluded from debates.

Here are some of the facts she shared, based on scientific research, which opened my eyes and helped me understand my own feelings and resulting behaviour.

Research has shown that in public women speak a lot less than men.

When a woman contributes to a debate, she is perceived by listeners to have spoken for longer and more often than she actually has.

Generally, in conferences, committee meetings, television or parliamentary debates, women aren't proportionally allowed the same amount of time to speak than men.

Women are spoken over and interrupted regardless of their status much more often than men.

Their ideas or views, or even factual information they impart, are not accepted in the same way as those shared by men.

The authority of a female expert or leader is generally questioned or challenged much more than that of a male counterpart.

I was trained from a young age by my parents to think before I spoke to an adult but I don't remember that being the case for my brother. I have now discovered that this social conditioning goes back to ancient times and continues to this day.

The Babylonians thought that if a woman spoke in public, she should have her teeth smashed with a burnt brick.

The Apostle Paul instructs the women of the early church in Corinth to be silent during worship.

In classrooms today, research has shown that teachers generally accept the calling out of answers by boys while chastising girls for the same behaviour.

It is clear that there is an unconscious bias in societies across the world that causes many females to hesitate before they speak in public. And when a woman does raise her voice or uses the authority of her position, she will often be characterised as bossy or bullying. She will be seen as unpleasant while a

man of equal standing will be admired for the same behaviour.

In her latest book published this summer, Sieghart calls the way successful women are belittled and undermined in public and professional life, 'the authority gap'. This is related to the gender pay gap which we are all aware of but is more difficult to calculate and counter because so much of it is due to unconscious bias, ingrained from what we have seen modelled to us in our own families and education from childhood.

Sadly, women can be just as guilty of this bias in favour of male authority than men, and it is just as common in church life as in any other part of society.

So what can we do about it?

In the final chapter of Sieghart's book, entitled 'No Need to Despair' she sets out the changes needed at organisational and legislative levels to close the gap. I believe the Mothers' Union has a role to play in lobbying for these changes.

There are also corrections we can begin to make as individuals in our everyday lives. We can become more aware of the language we use and the way we interact with our daughters and sons, our granddaughters and grandsons. We can notice if a woman is being interrupted or ignored in meetings and draw attention to it. We can speak out in protest when a woman is being punished and vilified for using the authority given to her by her position, and lend her our support.

*Nerys*

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

**It's how the Mothers' Union works  
best**

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