



## Peculiar Times!

**Greetings!** from the Mothers' Union Diocesan Trustees and Officers

### Amazing things are happening!

Right across the country, and here in St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, local Mothers' Union branch members have stepped up their support for their local communities during Covid-19 and are crafting 1000's of new essential items every week, including handmade scrubs, ear protectors, scrub and linen bags. First, a huge thank you for your generosity and application in supporting the Urgent Appeal sent out at the end of April.

Working around the clock in isolation members are fulfilling local requests from front line NHS staff in hospitals, who are finding it even harder to access these essentials, as well as from staff in community care settings, including care homes and hospices.

In our area we have been supporting residents in care homes through telephone calls; another branch is knitting the mask extension straps (to prevent soreness behind the ears from the elastic), and in another branch Jeanette reports that "61 laundry bags were delivered in total" and she has "now swapped to memory bags and face masks...". We have been supporting the homeless, the refugee and the women's refuge in Ipswich. Parenting skills too have come to the forefront, and shortly we will be making Christmas cards for those in our local prisons. We have been collecting recipes, and Jeanette (Faith and Policy) is also well under way gathering up prayers and beautiful photographs and pictures for a new MU "Book of Comfort" - it's going to be a wonderful publication, not only for those needing 'comfort' at this difficult time, but also a source of inspiration and encouragement for us all – a visual reminder of God's goodness, especially through troubled times. Others have been engaged as volunteers, working with the food banks and safely delivering items to those in need or leaving them outside houses for key workers to collect at set times. We've also valued financial contributions (but more of that next time).

Self-protection and care for others has always been vital for key workers, but never more so than now. At home too, Mothers' Union Scrubs and Scrub bags help ensure that staff can remove all clothing and keep it safely in a bag, reducing the possibility of infection in the home, keeping their families and households safe, which is what Mothers' Union is all about. As I write this, I too have been in receipt



"virtual", calorie-free chocolates - enjoy!

of a virtual "bag of love" (a small carrier bag with a packet of tissues [for those weepy moments], a tea and coffee bag [refreshment], some high-quality chocolates [indulgence] and a specially written prayer card from MU with words of comfort), and I want to say a huge thank you for all your love and prayers, and for being there at a time when my husband's life was hanging in the balance. Everyone – whether it be as individuals, branches, indoor or diocesan members, friends, family members and/or interested parties – everyone is doing something to make the world a better place, showing kindness to others, and building the kingdom of God in the places where they live, in their local community....

Above, are just a few examples of the many members and groups producing items and supporting our key workers across the UK and Ireland. Mothers' Union Chief Executive, Bev Jullien said: "The response from our membership has been overwhelming but not surprising. The rallying call from the movement was stay safe, but wherever people need help, we're there for them. Mothers' Union has always responded to community needs, and our response to Covid-19 sums it up – we do whatever is needed by the communities we are a part of, in partnership with others, to ensure the most effective response - we always have and always will." Thank you everyone!

Really good  
– Press 8!



Archbishop Justin Welby answers your call with a short message followed by a choice of options:  
Press 1 to listen to hymns we love with a series of short talks based on the well-loved hymn.  
Press 2 to listen to a different daily hymn.  
Press 3 for the Prayers which are specific for Coronavirus pandemic.  
Press 4 to hear options 5 to 7:  
Press 5 to hear a Church of England weekly Service.  
Press 6 to join in with traditional Morning and Evening Prayers.  
Press 7 to hear the latest Government advice about Coronavirus  
**Press 8 to hear Mothers' Union Midday Prayers**  
Press 0 to hear the first menu.

From our Diocesan Chaplain, Rev Canon Ian Wilson

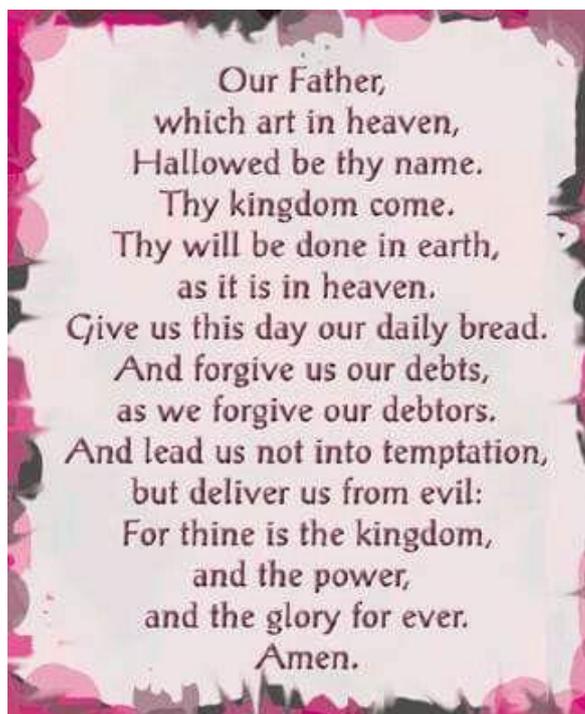
### *The Lord's Prayer or The Our Father.*

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently gave his backing to a call from the Pope for Christians across the world to join in saying the Lord's Prayer together as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Archbishop Justin said, "When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray he taught them the words of the Lord's Prayer (*Matthew 6.9-13 and Luke 11.1-4*). This prayer gives us words to pray even when we don't know what to pray".

Of course, this was a call for us to say the prayer together at 11am on Wednesday 25th March as we celebrated The Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, I would suggest that this is a prayer that we should all say together every day at the beginning of the day and at the end.

### *But why The Lord's Prayer?*

In his book *The Greatest Prayer*, the theologian John Dominic Crossan, having referred to The Lord's Prayer as Christianity's greatest prayer, also pointed out that there is something strange about this prayer. It is strange because it never mentions Jesus, praying on Sundays or Lord, despite the title we give it. It never mentions congregation, church, bishops, priests or pope. It never mentions a single doctrine about Jesus, substitutional atonement or sin, nor even the next life and hell so, he suggests, "perhaps it is a Jewish prayer (after all, Jesus was Jewish) which is why there is nothing Christian in it". However, this is also a strange idea because The Lord's Prayer doesn't mention covenant law, the Temple or Torah, circumcision or ritual purity. No, as Crossan points out, "it is neither a Jewish Prayer for Jews nor yet a Christian prayer for Christians". Rather, **"could it be a prayer from the heart of Judaism on the lips of Christianity for the conscience of the world?"** Why? Because it speaks of healing, of justice and equality for all people. It speaks of the release from indebtedness and it speaks of having enough resources - our daily bread - for **all people sufficient for this day.**



So, the reason why the Pope, supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, encouraged Christians to say The Lord's Prayer together is that it is a universal prayer that transcends denomination, and may even transcend religious affiliation, and because it is a prayer that "speaks to the conscience of the world". This then is the reason why we should all say the prayer on a daily basis especially through this critical time.

With every blessing and my continued prayers, Ian (The Reverend Canon Ian Wilson, Diocesan MU Chaplain)

Newsletter No. 5 will be sent out towards the end of the month. If you would like to contribute something (subject to editor's discretion!), please send your comments, opinions, and thoughts to Linda Ginn, Diocesan President at Wisteria Cottage, The Street, Hacheston, IP13 ODS, phone 01728 748365, send an email to [dpmusuffolk@gmail.com](mailto:dpmusuffolk@gmail.com) or contact our MU Secretary, Beryl - [secretarysuffolkm56@gmail.com](mailto:secretarysuffolkm56@gmail.com)  
Next time – an update on the progress MSH is making. I look forward to hearing from you.