

Peculiar Times!

Greetings! from the Mothers' Union Diocesan Trustees and Officers

I had never expected to be producing so many Newsletters telling you all what is happening in the Mothers' Union in relation to Covid-19.... Information comes to me as the Diocesan President, and in the past I have tended to circulate all the material to our Trustees. Since Covid-19 and the difficulties that Mary Sumner House have been experiencing, we have been asked to keep all our members informed.

Weeks have now turned into months, and MU things are becoming a little clearer. The need for fortnightly updates is dwindling (although I note that changes to the Provincial and National MU are still underway with issues around autonomy, membership, finance, subs, and further discussion around a new framework to identify a way forward for our Province), so we will still need to keep our members informed. This, therefore, will probably be the last newsletter in this format.... From now on trustees will take it in turns to keep you updated on a regular basis (along with information from *Families First*, *Families Worldwide*, the MSH newsletter (which has now been reinstated) and, of course, our own website (www.musuffolk.org.uk)

Local News – at Branch, Parish and Benefice level:

⑩ WAVE OF PRAYER focuses on our Diocese (16th-18th July) when everyone in MU around the world will be remembering us here in Suffolk and praying for us. Thanks to Janice and Jeanette for producing the service sheet (and if you can't find your print-out, email Beryl (secretarysuffolkmu56@gmail.com) who will gladly resend you a copy so you can join in with friends and family members as we pray for the work of MU overseas.)

- ⑩ I hope by now you will have received your ***Families First*** magazine. Let us know if it's not arrived yet...
- ⑩ The making of **face masks** – last few days to send them off to Clare. Still time to make some if you're quick – ring Clare, or see website for more details (www.musuffolk.org.uk). Hopefully they will be available for purchase through MUe - Clare - (and www.mueshop.org) at the end of the month.
- ⑩ Don't do computers? **Daily Hope** (0800 804 8044 – press option 4, then 8) and be a part of the wider MU network - we are not alone - we are all links in the chain, a bond of connection between people, a global network praying together for one another in our Wave of Prayer. Listen in - especially this week!

Diocesan News – what are we doing....?

⑩ Our ABC Strategy:

- **AFIA** – day trips and short breaks for families and keyworkers in the UK (particularly for those whose lives have met with adversity during this current pandemic) are being organised through our Diocese and MSH..... Get in touch with Val (afiamusuffolk@gmail.com) for more details.
- **Befriending** (with special focus on **Bereavement**) - see launch of our eBook (<https://bit.ly/3dC8N1n>) – a Book of Comfort – an excellent eBook and resource to use within our own circles of friends and acquaintances who need to hear words of comfort and reassurance. Also see St Andrew's Rushmere's booklet of "Prayers from the Heart – talking to God" – beautifully put together.
- **Clever** – Although the Working Group has not met since lockdown, Ipswich Borough Council has appointed one of their Community Safety staff – Angela Tolputt – to lead on a modern slavery campaign awareness in Ipswich, partnering with local churches. The priority was ensuring that rough sleepers were not left on the streets but had a safe place to stay. However, during the Covid-crisis Angela has been assigned to other key tasks including homelessness, but hopefully, when we eventually emerge from lockdown, she will be able to continue working with Carol (our Diocesan Lead). Things will start to move again, hopefully in August – either in person, or via Zoom.

- ⑩ Our Summer Council Meeting took place in June, albeit by Zoom, but we were able to achieve all that we set out to do, even if it was a little chaotic. Lessons will be learned! Beryl has circulated Minutes.

The Women's Refuge

You may save a life:

Since lockdown, the death toll of women from their abusive partners has skyrocketed. Victims of domestic abuse will now be able to access safe spaces at Boots pharmacies consultation rooms where they can contact specialist domestic abuse services for support and advice. The scheme is in response to the desperate situation facing many who are isolating with perpetrators during lockdown. (Anna)

PS: *Wonderful letter received by Sandra Griffiths from the Women's Refuge –

it just makes everything so worthwhile! (Not seen in yet? Ask Beryl for a copy...)

 Remember Mary Sumner Day (9th August) – downloadable services/resources available. Let's celebrate, even if we have to social-distance! Come up with ideas – think out of the box!

 Our thanks to Cathie for sorting out the Charity Commissioners, Jean for running the Prayer Chain, Margaret and Monica (despite their difficult circumstances) for sending out letters and cards for us, Keith for organising all the money, and Sue for keeping all our Diocesan Members in the loop - we are a great team!

Cluster and Provincial News

More Zoom Meetings..... Our next Zoom with the 30 Diocesan Presidents and MSH staff is on 16th July (to discuss the overall financial situation, general update and progress on the database) and our next Cluster Zoom (Peterborough, Norwich, Ely, Lincoln and me) is on 23rd July. Another (week beginning 10th August) to review inputs and decisions on the way forward for MU, especially discussion on how to communicate with Dioceses and Membership. Do remember Kathryn (our Provincial President), Bev (our CEO) and the Senior Staff Team in your prayers as they are working so hard for us.

National News from Mary Sumner House

In the Urgent Financial Appeal, MSH is three-quarters of the way there, with around £750,000 raised so far. We rejoice and give thanks to God. Thank you to everyone who has contributed, whether it be large or small...

Worldwide News

We had the privilege of Zooming with Sheran Harper (our Worldwide President) on the 2nd July – joining in worship together, and hearing of her vision for the Mothers' Union . We are networking with other community-minded organisations to see what divides, what unites and what brings us closer together.... (join in the survey - see recent MSH newsletter). Exciting times!

Prayer Topics:

- Thank God for the tremendous response and money which has been given to the MSH Urgent Appeal Fund
- Thank God for our fellow MU-members – for their love, support and cherishing of one another, especially when family members and their partners are going through tough times of illness/bereavement. God sees and knows.
- Thank God for our leaders who are working so hard and rising to all the challenges which change is bringing.

- Ask God to guide the Team and staff at MSH as they are on the threshold of making big decisions which will affect us all
- Ask God for wisdom, guidance and discernment as we begin to plan for the MU future here in our Diocese
- Ask God to bless our endeavours – as we seek to use our gifts, skills and talents for His glory here in Suffolk.

Newsletter No. 8 will be different.... And produced by one of our Trustees on a rota basis – perhaps!

If you would like to contribute something (subject to editor's discretion!), please send your comments, opinions, thoughts to Linda Ginn, Diocesan President at Wisteria Cottage, The Street, Hacheston, IP13 0DS, phone 01728 748365 or send an email to me at dpmusuffolk@gmail.com or to Beryl at secretarysuffolkmu56@gmail.com

Take care and continue to stay safe.

And finally, on a personal note, I have been very conscious that so many of you have been walking with me and sharing my journey on the road through bereavement. All the cards, emails, letters, virtual 'bags of love', phone calls and flowers and so much more, have been tangible reminders of our sisterhood in Christ, our oneness as we stand together, and have brought much comfort and peace beyond human understanding. Thank you for your love, support and prayers at this difficult time. L