

To all Trustees, Officers, Life Vice Presidents, Members (Diocesan/Indoor) and everyone else! (5th January 2021)

Greetings!

This comes with the warmest of wishes for a happy new year in spite of everything (sorry - no Christmas cards sent out this year – it was just too difficult). But a new chapter starts.

This morning we had an informal get-together on Zoom for all the St Eds and Ips Trustees and Officers to give thanks for the last year and all that it has been possible to achieve, to rejoice in the present, and to ask for God's guidance and blessing on the coming year. After a short service of rededication, we shared our covid stories -what we had been up to – tapestry, cross-stitch, photography, gardenwork -clearing and planting - meeting the neighbours (including a new birth two weeks ago) and working on material for a new MU publication on marriage – so diverse, we have such a wonderful group working together for the good of all.

I am attaching a copy of the PowerPoint presentation from this morning so that you too can share with us. One slide captures the essence of what we have been achieving in 2020 – it's truly amazing how God has, and is, using our MU members in spite of all the current difficulties. We also attempted to condense our thoughts into "6 words" – mine were "Praise God, rejoice and give thanks". What six words would you choose?

Today I was reading about a hard, bitter, peach – and wise words reminding us that "the peach may be green now, but we must wait - a little more sun and a few more showers", and the peach will ripen and become soft, sweet, enjoyable and a blessing. This encouraged me because sometimes I feel I'm just an 'old-fashioned Christian' – but we know that it is because of all those years of growing, ripening – those times when we have felt the warmth of the sunshine, and been refreshed by the showers (and also battered and bruised in the process!) that we know that if we wait awhile, the fruit will grow and be a blessing to all.

So, looking back, 2020 brought sunshine and showers: in spite of everything thrown at us, the Mothers' Union is battling through, changing the way we work but still holding to the "old-fashioned" values of prayer, love, service and commitment. It's been a very busy year.... thank you everyone for the part you have played in our local communities but at the same time having a global vision of God's world. Together, we have achieved much, and we are very grateful for each and every contribution. Thank you – and now it's back to work again....

Take care, keep safe, with love, Linda (Diocesan President)