

## **New Year Greetings to You All**

This newsletter comes with the warmest of wishes from Diocesan President Linda, Trustees and Officers of the St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Mothers' Union.

**As we move into a more challenging phase of this pandemic, we pray for our NHS as it cares for all those who are ill and comforts those who may not recover. We pray for the efficient delivery of the vaccination programme. We give thanks for the many examples of kindness, empathy and selflessness that have encouraged us over the last year.**

Looking back, 2020 has brought sunshine and showers. In spite of everything thrown at us, the Mothers' Union has battled on, changing the way we work but still holding fast to the core values of prayer, love, service and commitment. It has been a busy year and we would like to thank you all for the part you have played. You may currently be at home, feeling that you have not been able to give practical support, but your prayers for MU have made a difference.

Review of 2020 – Look at what MU has achieved –

- Prayer and relationship building in our communities.
- Financial support for the Urgent Appeal, Big Give, I-Chameleon, MUE etc
- Learning how to use Zoom, Webinars, social media, YouTube etc
- Raising awareness of MU through publicity – AFIA Grants, Discovery Day preparation (cancelled by Covid), Prayer Chain, celebrating anniversaries or writing letters.
- Branch endeavours – newsletters, posters, leaflets and Parish magazines.
- Producing the Book of Comfort
- Promoting our website [www.musuffolk.org.uk](http://www.musuffolk.org.uk) and our Facebook page.
- Campaigning around *16 Days of Activism*, *No more 1 in 3* and the *Clewer Initiative*.
- Being creative with knitting, sewing and craft skills. Making cards for prisoners.
- Helping in practical ways – baking, hospitality, Foodbanks and volunteering locally.
- Maintaining links with the Women's Refuge, the Night Shelter, Peppercorn Lodge and our hospitals.
- Spiritual Leadership from Ian our MU Chaplain, and Spiritual Director, Kathy.
- Maintaining the administrative, financial and technological systems to keep MU in Suffolk running smoothly.

This week Trustees and Officers met via Zoom to review and give thanks for all that has been achieved in 2020 and to ask for God's guidance and blessing in the coming year. We shared some of the activities that have kept us busy – cross stitch, work in our gardens socially distanced coffee with neighbours, working on a new publication about Marriage. Our theme for 2021 is **Rebuilding Hope and Confidence**. Please have a look at the film that Linda has prepared - look at [www.musuffolk.org.uk](http://www.musuffolk.org.uk) to find this 40 minute video.

**MU - One of the first women led organisations - we build resilience, challenge prejudice and advocate change**

**Blue Christmas** There was plenty of positive feedback from the Blue Christmas Service. One branch got together with 10 of their members and watched the service with their vicar. Thank you to everyone who made this service possible. More services on line are planned for 2021, if we are not able to meet in person, such as our Lady Day Service on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

**East Bergholt and Brantham Branch** had a virtual festive celebration in December. Boxes of home-made Christmas treats were delivered to members around the village in the morning and then over half the branch met on Zoom in the afternoon. The daughter of one of our members sent a photo of her mother Margaret opening her box. This was posted on Facebook. Margaret then received Christmas messages from Tasmania and Madagascar as well as from CEO of MU Bev Jullien and Past Worldwide President Lynne Tembey.

**Prayers for the Month** on [www.musuffolk.org.uk](http://www.musuffolk.org.uk) are from the Book of Comfort. For January, prayers and photographs from Kathryn Branch, Wendy Fellingham, Sarah Nicolson and Hilary Platt are being used. Contact Clare if you would like a copy of this book.

**Message from Clare new online shop for MUE** This will be launched at the end of January - the existing MUE shop is currently closed. I have a good stock of cards and MUE items so if you want anything, phone me on 01473 832808 or Email [clare.thomas@btinternet.com](mailto:clare.thomas@btinternet.com) and I will post the order to you. I am expecting a new catalogue at the end of the month and copies of this will be posted out to Branch Leaders and Diocesan Members.

#### **Social Media Webinar – Report from Clare Thomas**

I joined one of the MU Webinars about social media, last August. It was a Zoom meeting where two members of staff from Mary Sumner House gave a presentation about using websites and Facebook etc. They shared some helpful tips like where to find good images that can be used legally. All the webinars are recorded which means you can watch them later or take a quick look to see if you would find them helpful. Last years webinars are available here <http://www.musuffolk.org.uk/communication/webinars/>

**MU Magazine** – This will be posted out to all members in April but it will be possible for visually impaired members to receive an audio version. This will be a slightly shortened version of the full magazine. The audio version is free and the member would only receive the audio version not both. If you would like the audio version please let Clare Thomas know by 1<sup>st</sup> Feb on 01473 832808 or [clare.thomas@btinternet.com](mailto:clare.thomas@btinternet.com)

**Ipswich St. Augustine’s Branch** – A letter of thanks has been received from “Lighthouse” for over 40 bags of new items and sweets donated by St Augustine’s Branch.

