

January 2018

Dear Trustees, Branch Leaders and Members,

**The 2018 Mothers' Union Biennial Retreat at Belsey Bridge Conference Centre**

**COME REST, PRAY AND PLAY IN THE LORD**

Already the year is whizzing past.... but exciting opportunities await! Do come and join us and be a part of it all.

Christine and I spent a delightful afternoon earlier this week, in the Pilgrims Pantry at the Cathedral, meeting up with the Revd Kathy Bishop (Associate Priest and Spiritual Director in the Diocese of Ely), chatting about our hopes and fears for our Biennial Retreat at the Belsey Bridge Conference Centre. Our Retreat runs from Tuesday (from 2.30 pm) 15<sup>th</sup> May to Thursday (after lunch) 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018. We talked about the direction in which Kathy is planning and praying to take us – and it all sounds very exciting, and different: during her sessions, there will be teaching, and times for quietness and reflection, but also opportunities for sharing our experiences, supporting one another, and having fun and laughter. We will have chances to share our stories to encourage and inspire and find companionship as we journey along our spiritual path.

This year, as an experiment, we will be following the tradition of The Greater Silence – that is from 9.00 pm until 9.am - after Night Prayer until after breakfast, giving everyone an opportunity to meditate, reflect, think, read and write at the end of the day, in the quietness of our own space.

To maximise our opportunities to publicise the Retreat (and in keeping with F&P policy to promote and use every opportunity for **Free Publicity!**), I am attaching various options with this email which can be downloaded by Branch Leaders for their membership, or forwarded on to individual members. The information can be used for display on church notice boards, pew news, parish magazines, newsletters.... Depending on the amount of space you're allowed to use. By using many different methods, we can help to raise the MU profile within our Diocese and show that we are active and excited about what the MU is doing here in Suffolk – see which methods appeals to you...

- 😊 **Invitation Card** (2 options) for Pathways, can be downloaded, photocopied, or make up your own version!
- 😊 **Flyers** (one smaller, one larger)
- 😊 **Tri-fold, double-sided booking form** (with tear-off slip)
- 😊 **Shorter version of the booking form** for the Spring Pathways, space permitting.

Either booking form can be returned to me by post, with a cheque (either for the deposit or full-cost of the Retreat), made payable to **Mothers' Union**. Please let me know if you would like a receipt. Nearer the time, the Retreat Programme and a light-hearted booklet on *"How to Survive at Belsey Bridge"* will be available, both of which, if you let me know numbers in advance, can be reproduced in large print and/or collect at the Council Meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> March at Stowmarket.

Please remember the Retreat in your prayers (updated each month) at [www.musuffolk.org.uk](http://www.musuffolk.org.uk). We very much look forward to welcoming all who are able to come and join us and share in the fun.

With every good wish,

Linda