

URGENT APPEAL Coronavirus: a difficult ask

Dear

Spring 2020

So much has happened in such a short time, my thoughts and prayers are with you. I hope that like me, you take comfort in the words of our Lord from Isaiah 41:10: *'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'*

With this letter, I am enclosing your personal copy of *Families Worldwide*. At this most challenging time, we felt that it would be putting members at risk to follow the usual approach of delivery by hand, but wanted to make sure you have these prayer resources to sustain you.

Through all the uncertainty, one thing that remains constant and gives me immense hope is you. I am so proud of all you continue to do – it is this commitment that will help those we serve get through this pandemic and its longer-term impacts on our society.

Today, however, I have to make an urgent appeal to you. I had hoped I wouldn't have to write this letter, but the disruptions from COVID-19 leave me with no choice.

Mothers' Union is not immune to the impact of the virus. In common with many charities, we are facing a significant shortfall in income, currently forecast to be well in **excess of £1 million this year alone**.

This is because the UK's necessary measures to stop the spread of the virus have **abruptly swept away the income we would normally receive from conference room hire at Mary Sumner House (which is over £0.5m a year) as well as summer fundraising events. On top of that, income from our retail shop is on the decline.** Even with all our safety nets in place, this tidal wave of losses is hitting our charity all at once in a way no one could have foreseen.

It's a shock, I know, but the truth is COVID-19 is threatening the very heart of the Mothers' Union movement.

At Mary Sumner House, the hub of Mothers' Union, the team are cutting what costs they can with immediate effect. The senior leadership members have taken a 20% cut in their take home pay and the staff have united to take leave around Easter, ready to return as a full fighting force after the first – and let us hope, the only – COVID-19 peak in the UK. We are also making use of the Government "furlough" scheme, for over 20% of staff, to keep costs as low as possible during the crisis.

But for Mothers' Union to be here at the end of 2020, we still need to plug that £1m shortfall in income.

Please turn over

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Donate online today without leaving the comfort and safety of your home by visiting **www.support.mothersunion.org** or if you prefer to post your donation please complete the form below.

Please accept my gift of:

1. My details

<Account Number>
<Title> <Initials> <Surname>
<address 1>
<address 2>
<address 3>
<Town>
<County>
<Postcode/Country>

2. My donation

Please enclose a cheque made payable to **Mothers' Union** or complete the credit/debit card details below.

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Switch ☐ CAF Charity Card

Card No

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Valid from

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Issue No.

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Security code

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Signed:

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3. Please return this form or any cheque/cash donations to:

Mothers' Union, 126 Fairlie Road, SLOUGH, SL1 4PY

To manage our resources as cost-effectively as possible, we are working with Telebank, a fulfilment house who will help us with processing and acknowledging your donations.

Tick this box to make every £1 of your gift worth 25p more for FREE.

☐ Yes, I want to Gift Aid any donations made to Mothers' Union now, in the future and in the past four years until I notify you otherwise.

☐ I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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4. Keeping in touch

☐ You can request to stop receiving information from us at any time by ticking this box or by emailing fundraising@mothersunion.org

☐ To help Mothers' Union save costs, I do not require an acknowledgement.

Without these funds, we simply cannot meet the costs of staffing, safeguarding, development work, fundraising and governance. Ultimately, that means the heart of Mothers’ Union being torn out by the ravages of COVID-19, so I am asking for your help.

If you are able, and please, only if you are able – could I ask you to make a donation so that we will still be here after the crisis has passed?

Tragically, quarantine, self-isolation and staying at home are putting vulnerable people at risk of other dangers. **Home is not always a safe place to be, for victims of domestic abuse, or children in families living on the breadline.** Crowded in flats and houses, in a state of prolonged tension, the threats to their safety are especially serious, and relationships everywhere are under pressure.

These are areas where, inspired by faith, Mothers’ Union members have always been strong, leading the way in supporting those in need.

But by the end of 2020, the £1m gap means Mary Sumner House, the core of Mothers’ Union, may simply not be there to provide support to our movement.

I’m sure you feel, as I do, that we must ensure Mothers’ Union can continue to serve God and show God’s love, just as we have done for almost 150 years.

As Paul taught the Corinthians: *‘Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.’* – 2 Corinthians 8:10-11.

I also know that some of you and your loved ones are yourselves affected by this virus, or are concerned about unique challenges to your own day-to-day life. So please only support this appeal if you really feel you can.

In challenging times like these, I draw on my faith for strength, and I encourage you also to remain full of Hope, Confidence, Strength and Love. Whether you have loved ones with you at home or not, you don’t pray alone, because we all pray together as a worldwide family.

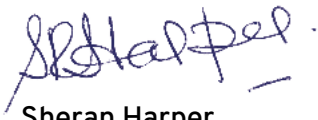
Online, we are streaming midday prayers on our Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/MothersUnion

There are more online resources to help through periods of isolation at **www.mothersunion.org**

Please, if you can, give a gift to this Urgent Appeal, and if you choose you can send a prayer of your own along with your donation. With your help, we shall continue to bring God’s love to those who need us most. Thank you, and remember not to be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Yours in Christian love,



Sheran Harper

Worldwide President

PS. Because this **Urgent Appeal** must take precedence, we are withdrawing the Summer of Hope Appeal and the Christmas Raffle this year. I pray that, strong in our faith together, we can continue the work that Mary Sumner began, both during this crisis and when the worst has passed, and serve our loving Lord into the future.

Mothers’ Union, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
T 020 7222 5533 E fundraising@mothersunion.org W www.mothersunion.org

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Please use this space to leave a prayer or message of strength with your donation
