

Issue 3/20

July - September 2020

Newsletter



Building Hope and Confidence

Congratulations

Canterbury & Ashford Archdeaconry

St Stephen's Church, Canterbury **50th Wedding Anniversary**
Margaret & David Horwood

St Martin & St Paul's, Canterbury **90th Birthday**
Margrit Dunster

Maidstone Archdeaconry

St Andrew's, Barming **Golden Wedding Anniversary,**
Marion & James Lakeland

A Message from Sheran Harper our Worldwide President

My beloved MU Family across the oceans, and from near and far,

I greet you with the love and courage of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour because He is our strength, our hope and our solid rock.

So much has been happening recently as COVID-19 is declared a pandemic and governments are advising that we take the necessary precautions to avoid the spread of the virus. There is so much we have to come to terms with in such a short time.

One of our faithful members, Dianne, went to deliver groceries to her mum who is self-isolating after recent travel. She was in tears as she dropped the groceries at the doorstep and watched her mum through the window with no chance of a hug.

There are so many similar stories including those of people who are ill or afraid, lonely or isolated.

And in times like these I encourage you to take heart and do not fear because the Lord, your God is by your side - an ever present help in times of trouble.



FROM THE EDITOR...

We are in very difficult times at the moment but we thought you would like a little information and some prayers to help you get through, so stay safe, and see you sometime in the future.

David Horwood

Front Cover Photo: Sheran Harper our Worldwide President.

Dear friends

We have been finding new ways of 'doing' and also of 'being'. After the Wave of Prayer we didn't meet inside our church buildings but joined with services transmitted over the internet. A welcome initiative for sharing prayer recordings by telephone is the Daily Hope (see back page)



Overseas links in Dutse and Kajo-keji have reported on their situations and ask for our prayers as they too are experiencing lockdown.

I endorse the comments of the Archdeaconry Presidents and thank all members for inspiring actions whilst themselves staying safe and shielding their vulnerable family members. There are love hearts from Holy Trinity Margate and these laundry bags for NHS ward staff sent by St Andrew's. We created neighbourhoods of helpers to accomplish daily tasks for others and a telephone army to reach out to the lonely and isolated with chats that break up the day.



Once the worst of the crisis is over, there will be the desperate need for healing and rebuilding within families and communities where lives are affected by poverty, domestic violence and bereavement. Action & Outreach may reimagine AFIA to include families of NHS workers. We have new diocesan contacts with Medaille Trust and for women homeless to be helped with practical donations.

We can pass on the excellent news about the emergency appeal for the central charity which has passed the halfway mark and on your behalf Trustees have sent £5000.

I write this as we are moving towards relaxation of the lockdown against the corona virus and so we are planning for members sharing fellowship together in the Autumn. Let me prayerfully share this thought in difficult times: I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.

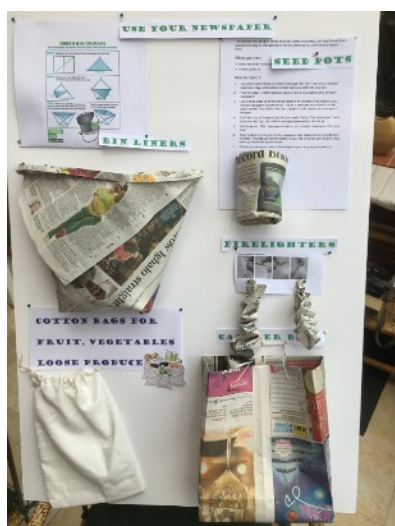
Grace and Peace

Marianna Poliszczuk Diocesan President,
email: marianna2@compuserve.com

St Dunstan's, Canterbury

St Dunstan's MU Members were active at the first Eco Fayre held in the church hall on Saturday 7th March. There were several stalls with ideas to re-use paper and fabrics, including Japanese-style gift wrapping using soft fabrics, making waxed fabric to cover food instead of cling film; cotton fresh fruit and veg bags; newspaper seed pots, bin liners and firelighters; art work using recycled materials and a FairTrade stall.

Liz Parsons, Branch Leader



Holy Trinity, Margate

Knitted hearts I made for QEQM. I sent them to the Palliative Care unit as they are given to patients and their families who are currently not allowed to visit due to COVID 19.

Wendy James, Branch Leader



Copy for the next Newsletter to be with the Editor, David Horwood, by Friday 31st July 2020. Please let me know what is happening in your area. Send to: 27 Abbey Gardens Canterbury CT2 7EU or email: boycieboycie@icloud.com.

Together in Prayer

July - August - September 2020

Lyndall Bywater, Changing Lives Prayer Co-ordinator for the Canterbury Diocese

‘Crossing Over’

Prayers and reflections for an extraordinary summer

When I was about eight years old, I started to have ‘mobility lessons’. That’s what they call it when they teach blind children how to get around safely without having someone sighted to guide them, and since I’m blind, it was an important part of my development. I can promise you I wasn’t walking the streets alone at that age, but we start then because there are certain skills which need to be learnt when the brain is very young.

One of those skills is how to walk in a straight line. That might sound rather basic, but when you can’t see anything around you, keeping a straight line can be difficult. And of course, straight lines are important in life, especially when you’re crossing a road. If you’re fortunate enough to be able to see the opposite pavement, it’s relatively easy to keep on target as you cross, but with no visual clues to guide you, the ability to keep a straight line becomes extremely important. Otherwise you risk veering off and losing your bearings ... or worse ...

I’ve been thinking a lot about this business of crossing roads lately. We know that this Coronavirus pandemic has changed our world; we’re not exactly sure how yet, but we know it has. It’s as though we’re crossing over into a new era – getting used to things we’d probably never even thought of this time last year – and yet we can’t see the opposite pavement. We don’t know what the future will be like, and that can be disorientating and frightening.

So how can we make sure we cross straight? How can we find a safe way through the unfamiliar to the unknown? And how can we help others cross safely too?

The answer, of course, is prayer. It will be a close, communicative, trusting relationship with the God who loves us that will enable us to cross safely. You may never have had to learn to walk in a straight line across a road, but I imagine you did learn your Green Cross Code, so you’ll be familiar with the instructions to ‘stop, look and listen’. Over the next three months, we’re going to do just that, with the help of some reflection questions, some prayer practices to try and a prayer to pray.

May you know God’s loving presence as you cross over into the good things God has in store.



Together in Prayer

July - Stop

Before you cross a road, stop! It's the first thing we teach children, isn't it? We stop because crossing is only safe when we have first paused, gathered our distracted senses, focused our minds and readied ourselves.

Questions to reflect on:

- What have you had to stop doing because of the Coronavirus pandemic?
- Is your life different now that those things have stopped? If so, how?
- What do you miss ... and what do you not miss?
- What have you started doing more of?

A prayer:

God of my past, my present and my future,
I give you thanks for this moment,
And I choose to stop –
To leave my past regrets in the bottomless sea of your forgiveness;
To leave my fears for the future in your strong, loving hands;
To rest here in the present, thankful for your presence.
Teach me the holy art of stillness –
When busyness drives me;
When boredom dries me;
When the needs of others drain me.
Bring my heart to quiet trust in you,
For you alone are life abundant and love everlasting.

Amen.

Prayer practice:

Set aside ten minutes each day to stop and sit still, conscious of being in God's company. There's no need to pray any complicated prayers; just enjoy the simplicity of being in God's living, loving presence. You might like to light a candle as a focal point, letting its flame remind you of light, love and hope.



Together in Prayer

August - Look

The second thing we do when we cross a road is to look. We notice our surroundings, seeing both the dangers and the possibilities, and then we can move forward with confidence. Prayer is about being in God's presence and talking together, but it's also about noticing things – letting God open our eyes to see the things we need to see.

Questions for reflection:

- As you look around at this world, impacted so deeply by the Coronavirus pandemic, what do you notice?
- What do you notice about how life has changed for your loved-ones?
- Is there anyone in your local community who's been overlooked in recent months?
- As you've journeyed through this strange time, what have you noticed about God?

A prayer:

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you that we are never out of your sight.
Forgive us when selfishness, busyness and indifference blind us to the needs of others.

Forgive us when doubt and despair fog our vision so we can't see where your Spirit is at work.

Open our eyes, that we might see the people you want us to see.

Clear our vision, that we might witness your wonders.

Renew our spiritual sight, giving us courage to see present realities and future possibilities.

For we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer practice:

If you're able to, why not go out for a walk around your neighbourhood. Before you leave, ask God to show you what you need to see. As you walk, keep looking around you and notice what God draws your attention to. What might God be saying to you through the things you see? Pray for the people, households, organisations and businesses you pass. As you return home, spend some time thinking about what God has shown you in your community.



Together in Prayer

September - Listen

The third thing we do before crossing over a road is to listen. We tune our ears to pick up and sort through the many sounds around us, so we can be alert for traffic which we may not have seen yet. Having stopped and looked, prayer is also the place where we listen. We tune the ears of our hearts and minds to pick up what God might be saying to us. Then we can walk forward in peaceful obedience to the voice of love.

Questions for reflection:

- Who have you listened to most over the past few months?
- What sorrows and joys have people shared with you recently?
- What do you most often say to yourself? Is there a message which tends to play 'on loop' in your mind?
- What words from Scripture have been most meaningful to you in recent weeks and months?

A prayer:

Lord, open our ears to hear the world around us –
To hear the voices of those who so often go unheard;
The echoes of pain beneath the shouts of anger and hostility;
The grief buried under polite small talk;
And the warmth and joy in the voices of those who love us.
Lord, open our ears to hear beyond the world around us:
To hear the wisdom of your Word,
The joyful praises of creation,
The heartening encouragements of our fellow pilgrims,
And the beautiful cadences of your song of love over us.
Lord, open our ears to hear you. **Amen.**

Prayer practice:

Open your Bible to a psalm and read it slowly through, then jot down on a piece of paper all the characteristics of God you find in that psalm (goodness, strength, justice etc). Then look over your list and choose the characteristic which strikes you most – maybe it's the most surprising or the most encouraging one. Carry that thought with you throughout the day, and whenever you find yourself in a difficult situation, remind yourself of it. You might even like to speak out loud, saying something like: 'this is hard but I remember that God is ...'.



St Michael & All Angels, Marden

Marden held their Wave of Prayer with the members shown.

Margaret Bradford



Heavenly howlers...

I thought you might like a laugh in these difficult times. - Ed

These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "Hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Don't let worry kill you off — let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

MU Branches in the Maidstone Area

For many years Mothers' Union branches in the Maidstone area have donated Christmas gifts for inpatients suffering from mental health issues at Priority House and the Trevor Gibbens unit. Often it is the only gift that a patient receives for Christmas.

Now a number of Mothers' Union members have played a prominent part in a new initiative by meeting an urgent request from Voluntary Services Manager, Helen Collins, to make laundry bags from washable material such as old sheets and pillow cases. These bags are large enough for staff to keep their personal clothing in while working and to hold their uniforms securely and to launder them. Members have also been involved in making masked ear savers, face masks and gowns.

Members of other voluntary groups have also helped and within ten days of the request being made enough laundry bags have been supplied to meet the needs of all the nursing and other staff employed by the Trust.

John Sweetman Social Policy Officer



**BEING THERE FOR FAMILIES
& COMMUNITIES EVERYDAY**

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Dates for your Diary

Please remember in your prayers:

Wednesday 1st July
10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Trustee Board Meeting, Diocesan House

How we have been meeting during lockdown.

The trustees have met using an on-line conferencing program called Zoom. We have been future planning and also kept our diocese in touch with developments at central MU. Similarly, the Archdeaconry Presidents enabled our members' 'Zoom in June'.

Thank you to everyone who has participated and therefore risen to these new challenges in communicating and the undeniable joy to 'see' and wave to each other from our front rooms.

Friday 31st July

Copy deadline for Diocesan Newsletter

Sunday 9th August

Mary Sumner Day

Wednesday 2nd September

Finance and D S Meeting

Wednesday 9th September
10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Trustee Board Meeting, Diocesan House

Cathedral Prayer Time is in abeyance following Church of England guidelines.

*** Please be aware that ALL meetings are subject to the Coronavirus - Covid 19 - situation, and therefore likely to cancellation.

In Memoriam

Canterbury & Ashford Archdeaconry

St Leonard's Deal

Lynn Inkley

Lynn was 93, and a very loyal member of both the Branch and the Church. She always insisted on going up to the altar, and helped in any way she could, Lynn was very sincere and Prayerful, and so thankful when given help and lifts. She was an inspiration to us all. We will miss her.

St Martin & St Paul's

June Coaker

Maidstone Archdeaconry

Holy Trinity, Milton Regis

Ros Hillock

Holy Cross, Bearsted

Gill Smith

This newsletter is produced by Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Canterbury. All items must come with a note of the contributor's name and contact details. The editor reserves the right to edit or not publish anything received. Items are not intended to represent the official position of the Church of England, nor the official position of the Mothers' Union.

A Word from our Archdeaconry Presidents

I thank God that in our times of uncertainty and fear we can count on the living word and extravagant love of our Father God to see us through.

Isaiah 43: 4 We are precious and honoured in His sight.

I thank God for all you wonderful members of our beloved MU who are giving support, compassion, and friendship to each other.

The main reason I joined MU is that Mothers' Union's very foundation is prayer. So thank you for your continued prayer for each other, I would also ask that you pray for our members who, although retired have gone back to work in the NHS. For daughters, sons and granddaughters of our members who are working in the NHS.

My prayer for us all is that in these days of challenge and uncertainty we may know the presence and power of our Risen Christ in new life-giving ways. And I pray for God to give us everything we need to persevere in hope, confidence, joy and the sure knowledge that His will, will be done and to Him be the Glory.

Amen.

Keep well, Keep smiling, and I am so looking forward to our first event together.

Love and hugs, Rita Pengelly, Ashford & Canterbury Archdeaconry President

I was sincerely blessed as I rang each branch contact the other week to check in on everyone and make known the difficult financial situation of Mary Sumner House. Patient & endurance was evident in every call. Members were keeping in touch ensuring that food and prescriptions were being organised by family and community members. Members were receiving calls from the Shepherding scheme in Sittingbourne and others were contently enjoying the blessing of their garden when they should have been on a cruise. We are all facing our own trials during these times some more than others. Therefore, please pray for those experiencing gender based violence, those caring for relatives, those with mental health issues and those grieving loved ones. When others ask where does our patient endurance come from? let us answer 'The LORD is near to all who call on Him...' Psalm 145:18.

Sally Phillips, Maidstone Archdeaconry President

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Canterbury & Ashford Archdeaconry President

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Canterbury Diocese website: www.muenterprises.org/canterburymu

Registered Charity No. 250124



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

0800 804 8044

DailyHOPE phone line menu options

- *** **Press *** to listen to Archbishop Justin Welby's message.
- 1** **Press 1** to listen to 'Hymns we Love' (this is a series of short talks based on well-loved hymns).
- 2** **Press 2** to listen to our Hymn Line (these are recordings of different hymns on a daily loop).
- 3** **Press 3** to listen to our Prayer Line (prayers that are specific and relevant to the Coronavirus crisis).
- 4** Otherwise, please **press 4** for more options .
- 5** **Press 5** to listen to the Church of England's weekly service.
- 6** **Press 6** to join in with traditional morning and evening prayers.
- 7** **Press 7** to listen to the latest Government advice on the Coronavirus.
- 0** **Press 0** to return to the main menu.