

Issue 2/21

April - June 2021

# Newsletter



## Rebuilding Hope and Confidence

## New Members

### Maidstone Archdeaconry

St John the Baptist, Tunstall

Stephanie Spinks

Sandra Smitherman-Banks

Lenham with Boughton Malherbe

Sylvia Birch

## Congratulations

### Canterbury & Ashford Archdeaconry

St Mary's Fellowship

**90th Birthday** - Janet Walmsley

As this is David Horwood's last newsletter as editor the Trustee Board would like to extend their thanks to him for all the hard work that he has undertaken since 2014.

Thank you David and best wishes!



We have an extended report from Blean as this Link with Madagascar has been going for several years and now they have some Mothers' Union members who are actively involved, it seemed a good time to feature it. Other news from overseas is from Daniele Ligneau-Wilton, our Overseas Links Officer. As you are well aware many Covid 19 restrictions are still in place here, so news is again very limited.

**Front Cover Photo:** Mothers' Union Worldwide President Sheran Harper has been appointed a Member of the Order of Service of Guyana. Sheran has also been awarded the Golden Arrow of Achievement for long and exceptional service to Mothers' Union in the Anglican Diocese of Guyana and internationally. Sheran said: "This award is a fantastic recognition of the work of Mothers' Union in Guyana and around the world. I am honoured to receive it. At Mothers' Union, we are a global family, and this award recognises the achievements of the movement as a whole, as well as individuals."

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Copy for the next Newsletter to be with Chris Cook by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

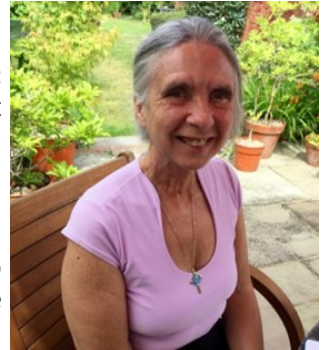
Please let me know what is happening in your area.

Send an email to [Christopher.Cook@mothersunion.org](mailto:Christopher.Cook@mothersunion.org)

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## Dear Friends

Why we don't get involved: too busy; don't feel able; not interested; at capacity. How are you feeling? Is it one or all of the above? Have you been wearied with juggling work (paid and voluntary), church, family and health all on top of lockdown or isolated but challenged by new technology? And now I am asking you to fill Trustee and Officer roles for the MU in this diocese to take us on into the next triennium and beyond (see Elections).



A hardy core is part-way through an on-line Moodal active learning group for Metamorphosis. These member virtual sharing opportunities and webinars from MU Central are varied and interesting. The first set task was to interpret and then decide our position on the 'blob tree' (back cover). Praying with purpose is one where we wanted to share its resource with you inside these pages. It has an ABC for MU@home prayer supporters, researching 'creative' prayer I discovered 51 craft ideas, many with templates, surprisingly in the MUeshop.org blog! (The MU shop catalogue is available to anyone by request.)

**'Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world'.** Bp Desmond Tutu. Now retired from public life, he recounted often an incident, when aged 9, that was to change his life. The day a white man stepped off the sidewalk and, as they passed, he tipped his hat in a gesture of respect to his mother! The white man was Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican priest who was bitterly opposed to apartheid. It changed Tutu's life. When his mother told him that Trevor Huddleston had stepped off the sidewalk because he was a "man of God," Tutu found his calling. "When she told me that he was an Anglican priest I decided there and then that I wanted to be an Anglican priest too. And what is more, I wanted to be a man of God" said Tutu.

The key tenets of who WE are as members of Mothers' Union in the world - our advocacy for gender justice; to be active in peace and reconciliation; and, to foster all that builds up self-reliance. I am grateful for all your prayer activities and acts of selfless love that have encouraged us over these past months. We are moving ahead slowly towards a time when it is hoped all legal limits on our social contacts can be removed.

Grace and Peace

***Marianna Poliszczuk Diocesan President***

*email: marianna2@compuserve.com*

# Around the Diocese

## St Cosmus and St Damian in the Blean's Link with Ambatondrazaka, Madagascar.

Our parish link was formed thirteen years ago within the Diocesan partnership Link with Madagascar. In the beginning we worked hard to get to know each other in order to form a relationship which was centred on prayer. We each prepared a LINK PRAYER which is prayed each Sunday in our respective churches.

We regularly corresponded through emails. At first the parish priest in Ambatondrazaka did not have a computer, so this was one of the first things we bought to enable our relationship to develop as equal partners in Mission. Regular financial commitments did not enter the relationship until after two people from Blean Church had been to visit and work out, with the parish priest, what their needs and priorities were.

During the time spent with them, Dr Jim Appleyard and Sally Penfold discovered a young vibrant Church doing its best with very minimal material or human resources, very few educational opportunities, few places with electricity or piped water, hardly any health care, and very high maternal and infant mortality rates etc. They also discovered that Ambatondrazaka is a very large town separated from everywhere else including the capital city by at times a treacherous and unmade sand road, impassable in the wet season. Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world. Within this environment the faith is strong, worship is vibrant but very traditional and the singing is harmonious and joyful. The church is alive and active but with few opportunities for people.

Our first joint project was a feeding programme for children through the churches. We sent money twice a year and the parents prepared healthy meals... but that was just on Sundays. This was followed by a training programme for evangelists, a basic healthcare course for mothers, the funding of materials to build a new church, (which they built for themselves) and solar panels for electricity - which in one village, the adjacent school was able to use during the week. In Blean we have a "Madagascar Lunch" about once a month to raise money (before the pandemic) and the PCC is committed to regular giving each year. Throughout this time the whole Church was involved by keeping up with the news as we received it and in a sharing and learning time at the end of the lunches. This has been a key to the ongoing involvement of the Church as a whole.

In 2018 a second visit was made. This time we led two 3 day courses for women, to encourage them to initiate or support projects related to health care and family planning. They showed a willingness to work together



**The New Church**

through the Mothers' Union and in their roles as evangelists and catechists. It was a confidence building and sisterhood exercise which has born fruit since we left. They mostly needed encouragement to believe that God has no eyes, hands feet etc to do his work other than our own and that prayer is more often than not answered through our response to what we pray for. Following our departure, the wife of the parish priest began to run literacy groups. One community set up a seed corn project with a grant to ripen and sell bananas, sewing machines have been bought and used, other needlework materials have been used for women to earn money for their families and the promotion of 'hand washing' has been taken up by the women in their local churches.



**Revd Olivier and  
parishioners after some flooding**

Eventually Blean decided and agreed with their parish priest, the Revd Olivier Rajarison, to send a sum of £3000 a year for three years for the purposes of health and education. We could do this because their accountability for money sent has been good and we trust them as equal partners to make the right decisions for the needs of the Church and their communities, under the broad umbrella of health and education. Since the pandemic we've added that we are happy for them to just use the money in a way that is right for the needs of the people.

We are also now looking for a way to support theological education and ordinands and to find a way to work with other Mothers' Union partners. Before our second visit 21 members of Blean Church joined the MU as a body, so that during our visit, we would share a common link with the women, who (as in most places) are the mainstay of family and church life. Our being members of the MU was important to the women and we have been able to build on this through correspondence, encouragement and support.

Mary Cooke and I are hoping to work out some way of strengthening our membership as a body when this pandemic is over.

It is such a joy and privilege to have such a strong link and bond with a people whose economic and cultural differences are so different from our own, but whose faith, courage and endurance through difficulties is so inspiring. We each bring to this link and relationship the gifts that God has given us. Now, through God's grace we have a beautiful and fruitful friendship which year by year we pray will continue to bear a harvest of fruit that is pleasing to God.

***Eileen Routh***

## Diocesan News

Nominations for Diocesan President and Trustees are made in this final year of our Triennial as we are beginning to plan ahead to form a new Trustee Board for 2022/24.

Initially we must find a new President as our current Diocesan President, Marianna, will be retiring at the end of this year. We are looking for someone who can help build on the strong foundations which have been laid; a person who can energize the body of the Mothers' Union in this Diocese.

We can help also if you wish to understand more about Trustee positions - there are 5 vacancies to fill. Please prayerfully consider whether you could offer to take on this responsibility or whether someone in your branch or a Diocesan Member known to you would be ideally suited.

Generally, President and Trustees serve for 3 years and there is the possibility of standing for re-election for a second term if they wish. If you would like to suggest a name(s), a form can be downloaded via our website link or you can write a letter containing your name & address and the name & address of your nomination(s) (with permission).

Please send to: Susan Bradley whose address and email is under Contacts. Closing date for nominations is DP (open now), Trustee Board (31<sup>st</sup> May) and Archdeaconry Presidents (1<sup>st</sup> June).

***Jean Sweetman, Deputy Diocesan President***

### Together in Prayer

I'm always so grateful for all those who contribute to this feature in the middle pages of our newsletter. Working three months ahead is not always easy - taking into account a pandemic was tough but our recent writers really rose to the challenge and God has continued to help and encourage us in our prayer life.

Personally, I have found there has been much more to pray for but during the first lockdown (when I wasn't at school), more time to pray. I'm sure, like me, you have not always found it easy but have adapted to and found new ways to pray on your own or with others - by telephone or Zoom for example.

Before all these challenges, a new MU resource 'Praying with Purpose' was being developed which has proved a timely addition to our prayer life now.

So, instead of monthly topics, this quarters' DNL contains a 'pull out and keep' middle pages with some of the Praying with Purpose materials. Many more can be found on the main MU website and they will be added to in the future. As groups and individuals experience answers to prayer and grow in confidence then it is hoped that they will feel free to adapt the resources provided and to use their own prayer ideas. Praying with Purpose is intended to be a "living" resource; growing and changing as new ideas from those who use it are included.

Do let me or Mary Sumner House know if you have something you would like to add. ***Sandra Goodey, Trustee/Faith***



## Together in Prayer

Sandra Goodey - Trustee/Faith Coordinator

### Praying with Purpose

*Here is a template which you can use as a framework for prayer - on your own or in a group, choosing different content from the following pages, or your own resources.*

**1**

#### Encourage

At the start of your prayer time, remind each other of God's willingness to hear and answer - using quotes and bible verses.

**2**

#### Open in Prayer

Listen to God and each other. Sharing any answers to prayer, reiterate needs still to be met. And any new prayer requests.

**3**

#### Be Specific

Now move into praying for specific aspects of the project/initiative etc. There are various ways of structuring your prayer time. You may like to choose different ones each time you meet, from the given resources or your own ideas -

Write down any particular themes that emerge as you pray and pass them on to others who are not with you.

**4**

#### Blessing

Finish by asking God to bless your work using a Biblical acclamation or blessing. You may like to add your own phrases to reflect the specific work for which you've been praying

*You can find a more detailed version of this template on the Mothers' Union website :- search for 'Praying with Purpose' in the resources section*

*<https://www.mothersunion.org/praying-with-purpose>*

# Bible Verses And Quotes

## **P**ray with determination

Ask and keep on asking and it will be given to you; seek and keep on seeking and you will find; knock and keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives, and he who keeps on seeking finds, and to him who keeps on knocking it will be opened.

*Matthew 7: 7-8 (AMP)*

## **P**ray with faith

I call on you my God, for you will answer me: turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

*Psalms 17:6*

## **P**ray with confidence

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with Confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

*Hebrews 4:16*

## **Q**uotes

Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayers is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference. *Max Lucado*

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness. *Martin Luther*

Prayer is where the action is. *John Wesley*



# Opening Prayers

Loving Lord,  
We thank you for the joy  
Of coming together in your presence;  
To petition and plead  
In unity and faith  
We bring our prayers to God.

Loving Lord, as we meet to pray for .....  
As we share in building of the Kingdom of God on Earth.  
We praise You with thankful hearts for your answers to our  
Prayers thus far, in particular .....  
Truly you are an awesome God!

## Creative Ideas for Prayer

**P** **rison work or modern day slavery**  
Write prayer requests on slips of paper and link to make a paper chain of prayer. Where possible display the paper chain as a reminder to pray.  
As prayers are answered, the chains could be broken in a symbolic action.

**P** **raying through God's word**  
Choose an appropriate Bible passage, reflect on it for a short time then use the thoughts God highlights to you as pointers for prayer. e.g.

AFIA : Matthew 11 28-29  
Family Life: Mark 10 13-16  
Relationships: 1 John 4 7-12

Hospitality: Mark 6 35-44  
Support: 1 Peter 4 8-11

## Craft

If you enjoy craft activities you could also engage in them as another way to pray - especially if the project includes craft in some way e.g. knitting - pause after every row to pray.; focus on those who will benefit from the knitted item and use your thoughts as a basis for prayer.

## Family life

Use a game provided by families as a way of praying e.g. stand in a circle and throw a ball. Whoever catches it calls out an issue for prayer. You can adapt this as a way to give thanks for answered prayer etc.

## Volunteers

Explain the qualities and skills needed for each role. Place a glass pebble on a large plate containing unit tea lights, representing each person. Have a short time of silent prayer as you light the candles.

## Blessings

**M**ay the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:13*

**N**ow to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever Amen *Ephesians 3:20-21*

**T**O him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy - to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore! Amen *Jude 24-25*

# Around the Diocese

Our Link Prayers (they could be used by any church with a Link)

## **1... From St Cosmus and St Damian in the Blean**

Heavenly Father, as we draw close to you in prayer, draw us ever closer to one another in love.

May we learn from one another, may we encourage each other in the doing of your work.

Give us the grace to continue living in faith and walking in hope.

Bless and prosper our friendship, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

## **2....From our link Churches of Ambatondrazaka .**

God our Heavenly Father, Blessed be your name forever.  
Through your Beloved Son you give us a new commandment:

Love one another.

We ask the fellowship of your Holy Spirit so the link between our parishes becomes evidence and proof of your living love.

Bless our Link so it may bring the fruits of development in your Church's life, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

***Eileen Routh***



# Around the Diocese - MU Live

## St Michael's, Maidstone

One of the things we have been doing while in lockdown!

Twiddle Muffs

You may wonder what twiddle muffs are. Well the ones MU members have provided are knitted—muffs to put your hands in, with buttons stitched on the outside for restless hands to 'twiddle' with.



So many therapies for anxious minds involve occupying hands—with painting, writing, playing an instrument, gardening, baking and many others. If minds are too restless for this then twiddle muffs help to still the hands, still the minds.

Elizabeth Bryson, our Anna Chaplain, took 13 to the Poplars nursing home and they have asked for more. This looks like being an ongoing project. If you would like a pattern please contact Daphne Tester at [daphnetester1@gmail.com](mailto:daphnetester1@gmail.com)

***Ann Rust***

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## ICELANDIC JUMPER FOR SALE

Hand knitted Jumper in Icelandic wool (they are light and warm) Size 95cms/38ins

Price £ 60 (a bargain)  
All the money to go to AFIA.



Contact Janet Robertson  
01227 367651  
or email  
[ejanetmarylyn@waitrose.com](mailto:ejanetmarylyn@waitrose.com)

# News from our Overseas Links

As we battle the pandemic here in England, our Overseas links are not spared, even if they are not "officially" affected.

## **Tarime, Tanzania**

Not having heard from Grace Monge, our Link Officer in the Diocese of Tarime for over a year, I decided to write to the Diocese to find out if all was well. To my surprise I received the following letter from Grace: *Praise the Lord. We thank you for your lovely letter. I see your messages you sent to us. We also thank our Lord for giving us an opportunity to enter a new year let the glory be to God.*

*In reality we have not communicated with you due to my bad health. I have been in bed suffering for almost a year neither talking nor walking. But now I have recovered. I thank God for that. Now I'm in the office since 11th Jan 2021 but today by the glory of God I log in our email and I seen many message from you and others friends of our Diocese have sent greetings and invited message. Thank you for wishing us a new year with peace and joy, let the same be to you all*

*May God bless you*

*Lay Canon Grace Monge*

We are sad to be losing this prayer link and have received a further email of thanks for our partnering. - *Daniele*

## **Rwanda**

I do want to talk about Rwanda as this may shed some lights in other African countries, especially those close by. Rwanda went into lockdown last spring after the first few cases, especially in **Cyangugu** as it is bordering with the Congo. All was going back to normal until, a few weeks ago, the Archdeacon of the Cathedral (whom I knew very well) died after testing positive on Covid. Of course he had been in contact with many people at the cathedral. Testing is not automatic, but a few were tested and were positive. So Cyangugu is again in lockdown. In **Kigali**, the capital, Covid has again shown its ugly nose, and they are also in serious lockdown. The city is in complete isolation. Nobody can come in nor go out. No vaccination yet, so they are all praying for the vaccine to come soon!

## **Conclusion**

The situation in Africa is still very precarious. Life continues in many parts with death as its daily routine. Please keep praying for our links. Pray for Grace Monge, in Tarime, thanking God for her recovery, and waiting for further news regarding Covid. Pray for our friends in Nigeria especially in Dutse, as they face daily dangers. Pray for understanding and respect between people of different faiths. Pray for our Kajo-Keji friends in the

camps near Moyo, that they may return safely to their homes. Pray for the people in Rwanda, who are faced with a complete lockdown, which means no means of working and feeding their families.

We thank God for all our blessings and for the fact that we now have a vaccine. Let us pray that the vaccine soon reaches the shores of Africa, and bring some relief to the countries which are most affected by the pandemic.

***Daniele Ligneau-Wilton, Overseas Officer***

## AFIA 2022



Planning for AFIA 2022 is now well underway and we hope to provide our residential week at Ashburnham Place, near Battle in East Sussex in August 2022. This is a Christian retreat and conference centre and will be ideal for our purposes!

Rita Pengelly is our AFIA Coordinator assisted by Sue and Rachel Thomas. Obviously we now have to concern ourselves with fundraising for this important project and Rachel has produced some wonderful AFIA collection boxes to hold all of your spare change!

If you would like a box to begin your own collection please contact Rita or Sue and they will be more than happy to assist you!

## Dates for your Diary

### Please remember in your prayers:

Sunday 4th April	Easter Sunday
Thursday 29th April	Zoom Coffee Lounge with Midday Prayers
Friday 30th April	Copy deadline for Newsletter
Thursday 27th May	Zoom Coffee Lounge with Midday Prayers
Tuesday 22nd June	Annual Meeting - St Paul's Canterbury
Thursday 24th June	Cathedral Prayer Time

## In Memoriam

### Canterbury & Ashford Archdeaconry

All Souls, Cheriton	Barbara Mills
St Martin & St Paul's	Mary Lawson

### Maidstone Archdeaconry

St Michael's, Sittingbourne	Daphne Moran
St Nicholas, Allington	Connie Davies
	died the day after her 94th birthday
St Michael & All Angels, Marden	Angela Durnford, Lady Susan Fenn

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### MU Emergency Prayer Chain

**Canterbury Diocese website:** [www.muenterprises.org/canterburymu](http://www.muenterprises.org/canterburymu)

Registered Charity No. 250124

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# Which Blob are You?

