

## Transformation – Now!

### 2023 Praise Activity Stretching with Psalms

“Psalms & Stretches” is a creative way of uniting body, soul and spirit. This reflective form of gentle exercise helps us to connect with the Bible by combining movement with meditating on the Psalms. We can creatively worship as we fully embody the word of God.

Stretching with Psalms can be enjoyed by individuals and as a group activity. You may like to use it as a creative form of praise at the beginning or end of your Branch meeting. Or it could form part of a Retreat or Quiet Day. It could be useful in stretching out tensions during Trustees or Committee meetings!

You will find more information and videos to watch and follow at the Psalm and Stretches website  
<https://www.psalmsandstretches.com/>



## Newsletter

January—March 2023



# TRANSFORMATION NOW

# FUNDRAISING

Canterbury Diocese have a Go Fund me account & also a PayPal Giving Account.

These are linked to the Diocese Bank account and any Donations received go directly to the Diocese.

Our all-year fundraising accounts are set up for anyone to donate through: Go Fund Me using this link: <https://gofund.me/9f824b9b>

Or

PayPal giving account for the Diocese that is:

[paypal.com/gb/fundraiser/charity/3266517](https://paypal.com/gb/fundraiser/charity/3266517)

Please Feel Free to Share our fundraising links.

For more information, please contact Rachel Thomas - [canterburydiocesemothersunion@gmail.com](mailto:canterburydiocesemothersunion@gmail.com)

Rachel Thomas

Trustee

Please remember that donations can be gift aided and details can be obtained from Chris Cook

Our front cover for this edition shows the families that attended the AFIA holiday last summer enjoying a Christmas Party together. Sadly two key people were missing— our own Rita and Craig, husband to Marie and Dad to their three children. Despite this they were all able to enjoy a fun afternoon that included a visit from Father Christmas. Subsequently a beautiful Christmas Hamper was donated to Marie and family from the AFIA families. Thanks to Sue and Rachel Thomas for helping organise this.

**Our Rita 17th February 1950 - 1st October 2022**

What can I say. Oh! how we miss you.



Rita came into the Mothers' Union after attending a General Meeting and after some time she was invited to join the Holy Trinity branch in Cliftonville while out at another occasion with the then branch leader. She didn't really feel she was able to as she had been divorced and remarried and didn't know very much about it. Well, she certainly put that part right as she became more and more involved and so enthusiastic about everything it stood for. Whenever she spoke about the organisation, she would always comment on how awesome it was. She became a full member and then after a short while became a Trustee and got involved in all kinds of activities that were taking place. She and her husband Simon joined a group of Trustees and members that visited the refugee camp in Uganda that had been set up for those fleeing South Sudan. She was so moved by this that she did all she could to continue with the work that had been started out there including making dignity packs for the young girls and women so that they could continue to go to school and work rather than having to stay at home due to their menstrual cycles as they had nothing to protect them. She and Simon helped with the provision of sewing machines so this work could keep going. She has raised a substantial amount of money with the walks she did in the name of the Mothers' Union, and she visited many branches around the diocese and passed on her passion. She took over as Canterbury Archdeaconry President just over 3 1/2 years ago and again threw herself into this role encouraging members to knit premature baby hats, knit octopuses or premature babies to hold, support the homeless, those who need help with setting up their homes after being homeless as well as many others. This year, she helped organise and take part in the AFIA holiday at Ashburnham which she felt was so worth while and much needed for families going through difficult times. She was so proud of her family - her three daughters, Simon's three daughters and one son and their 17 grandchildren and great grandchildren and of all their achievements. She was always there for them to give them support and encouragement but most of all her undying love for them all. Rita has left a huge hole that cannot be filled but I know that she is now with her Father God, as she called him, and at peace. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Margaret Horwood

# In Memorium

## Maidstone Archdeaconry

St Andrews

Barming Heath  
Milton Regis

John Dickens

Jean Chamberlain

Jean Chamberlain sadly passed away on the 25th September 2022 after a fairly short illness. Jean was not only a very active and valuable member of our Mothers' Union, but she also re-established the group in 2010. She was our first leader and held that role for many years, until bad health forced her to resign, although she continued to be one of the joint leaders. The decision she took to restart MU in Milton Regis was as much a shock to her as to those accompanying her on that sunny afternoon whilst we sat drinking tea at an open day of The Living Well. Her enthusiasm was great to watch as she presented information to likely candidates, sometimes the same people on several occasions! She would point out not only the good work achieved by MU but the fellowship and growth of faith that came with being a member. Her enthusiasm was infectious and irresistible. Jean held an important role in Holy Trinity Church for forty plus years, not only inspiring our congregation but also in the local community and deanery for her consistency in caring and reaching out to people. Jean was a very special lady and will be greatly missed by so many people.



Angie Daniel

It is with great sadness that we were informed of the death Mr Craig Allen. Craig and his family attended the AFIA holiday this summer at Ashburnham. Please remember Craig and his family in your prayers

If you would like to receive your Diocesan Newsletter from the Mothers' Union via an email so that you can read it online please let me know. Jackie Curd

Dear Friends,

Here we are starting off a new year, 2023. We are one year through the Triennium already. What a year we had in 2022. The death of her majesty Queen Elizabeth II hit many of us hard. What an inspiration and steadying influence she was to all, and a loyal Patron to the Mothers' Union. The war in Ukraine brought home the importance of love and family life, as we saw others being torn apart and having their lives shattered. We saw Prime Ministers come and go and our own country suffer in many ways, with family life put under great pressure.

We had wonderful times too. Our Pop-up Teas, the Lambeth Conference and AFIA holiday along with the Platinum Jubilee events. Throughout it all we have prayed to our God of love, who knows and loves all the world and everyone in it.

So, as we step into 2023, let us be strong and bold. Let us be assured of our loving God's presence beside us. Let us look forward with excitement and anticipation to what the year holds.

The Trustee Board ask you to remember them in your prayers. They are there for each of you and you will find their names and details in this edition.

Do treasure your membership of the Mothers' Union. It is a wonderful global force for good and it will enhance each of our lives, by prayer, fellowship and opportunities to be alongside others.

Wishing you all the best for a memorable 2023, and looking forward to seeing you at MU events throughout the year.

Sue Spillett  
General Trustee

# Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis is for anyone who wants to work for change in their MU, church and community!

What? Our 8-Module Course will help you to think creatively, build your skills and confidence and give you the tools to put your faith into action to join in God's wonderful work of transformation.

Topics include Listening, creativity and Community, Discovering our Vision, Celebrating our Resources, A Heart of Compassion, Building Relationships, Understanding our Community, Tools to Reflect and Learn from Change, and Stepping out in Faith.

Each Module takes place over 2 weeks and includes:

- 📖 Bible studies using a range of styles including Lectio Divina, monologues, art, drama and music.
- 📖 Inspirational Case studies
- 📖 Practical and easy to use tools
- 📖 Online discussion forums where you can share your ideas and learn with other participants

How? Learning will take place in your own time at your own pace using our Moodle Platform, in small action learning groups where you can learn, reflect, pray and encourage each other to take action and in 90-minute zoom sessions. These will be fun and interactive sessions where we reflect together on what we've learnt from the online resources, share new materials, reflect on the bible and end with prayer.

When? Introductory workshop at Mary Sumner House on Friday 27 th January 11.30-4 pm. (zoom catch up for those who cannot make it on Tuesday 31 st January at 2 pm).

## OVERSEAS NEWS

This article was sent before we learnt of the sad news of Bishop Emmanuel. We send our love and prayers to his wife Cecilia and his family.

**Kajo-Keji, South Sudan:** Many people are returning but a good number are still in the Refugee settlement. Most of the returnees are women and they are involved in garden work. The food ratio is reduced to 4kg per person, per month. This has made life difficult and many opted to return voluntarily to South Sudan.

The Episcopal Diocese of Kajo-Keji (EDKK) is trying to establish integration programs especially for the women and youth groups in order to adjust and live well. Please pray for us in the Diocese on the following.

1. Integration programs in EDKK
2. Those who have voluntarily returned
3. The children who are left behind for school
4. Pray for the youth who are not in the school; they also need an integration programme.

### **Dutse, Nigeria**

The flood disaster has affected many of our Church members in different ways, and this has added hardship in the life of the already struggling masses of our Diocese. Farms were washed away by the flood and many shops and business centres were not accessible for weeks. The Bishop's house was also affected as part of the fence collapsed and affected my wife's fish pond. While we were collecting some of the surviving fish, unfortunately some came to help themselves by stealing the fish. To the glory of God the fence was fixed and life continues.

Bishop & Mrs. Markus Yohanna Danbinta,

### **Akoko-Edo, Nigeria**

We know that Bishop Oyekpen died this summer. MU are at a standstill right now until a new Bishop is appointed and "Mrs Bishop" becomes the



President of MU. Victoria Oyekpen is naturally mourning the passing of her dear husband. They both celebrated their 50th birthday in 2021 and the 10 year anniversary of their Diocese. At that time she sent us some wonderful photos of the celebrations. Yesterday I received one photo of the grave with the sad picture of Vicki next to it, with the message: "Thank God the grave marble work is completed." I guess she now feels she has done her duty.







Cathedral Prayer Time in November was led by Jean Sweetman and focussed on the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence.

### Shoebox Appeal

Some of our branches took part in the Blythswood Shoebox appeal. This is such a worthwhile cause collecting items and packing them in a shoebox. People who receive these boxes have nothing and are so delighted with their gifts. Rachel and I collected thirty-one boxes and delivered them to the warehouse in Rainham. We have a speaker from Blythswood coming to our Tunstall branch in February and we look forward to hearing what she has to say.



Susan Thomas



On Sunday 4th December Father Christmas made an early detour to Canterbury to join the families who had attended the AFIA holiday in the summer at a Christmas Party.

# Metamorphosis

Thereafter, we will meet on zoom every fortnight starting Tuesday 21st February from 2.00-3.30. A catch-up session will be held for those who cannot attend on Thursdays, starting 23rd February from 4-5 pm on zoom. The last session will be on 16th May (or 18th May for catch up).

Cost - £50 per person

To register please contact [development@mothersunion.org](mailto:development@mothersunion.org) by 13th January 2023

## A thank you message from Susan Bradley

Dear All

Thank you so much for the lovely Mother and Child ornament, a wonderful reminder of our time together.

Have a joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year and I hope to see you sometime.

Love Susan

## Mothering Sunday

Back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, on Mothering Sunday, people used to return to the church where they were baptised, or the local parish church. This was known as their 'mother church'. The essence of this practice was that people remained in touch with the community they had grown up in. The actual service took place on the fourth Sunday of Lent and symbolised the coming together of families. As practices gradually changed, it became a day when servants of large households and country estates were allowed to return home to visit their families. The traditions associated with the day were changing too. The day itself became less focused on the religious roots and more about specific relations within families. In modern times, there has been increased commercialisation and secular uptake. Mothering Sunday has become very much a recognition of the role of a mother in contemporary society. Gifts are sold, flowers are bought and cards are sent. This year remember the "mothers" in your life and give thanks for them.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2023

### Please remember in your prayers:

19th January	Trustee Board Meeting
26th January	Cathedral Prayer Time in the Jesus Chapel 12.00
23rd February	Cathedral Prayer Time in the Jesus Chapel 12.00
28th February	Deadline for the DNL
7th March	Members Meeting, St Paul's Church, Canterbury 10.30-12.30pm . Lunch available
16th March	Trustee Board Meeting
16-18th March	Wave of Prayer. Branches times tba
19th March	Mothering Sunday (MAMD Appeal MSH)
25th March	Lady Day.
30th March	Cathedral Prayer Time in the Jesus Chapel, 12.00

## TRUSTEE BOARD

Sandra Goodey	Trustee and Faith Community of Interest
Susan Thomas	Trustee and Treasurer
Rachel Thomas	Trustee and Fundraising Co-Ordinator
Susan Spillett	Trustee
Jackie Curd	Trustee and Safeguarding Co-Ordinator
Debbie Smith	Trustee
Sally Philips	Trustee

Ant member of the Trustee Board can be contacted via email—  
MUtrusteeBoard@gmail.com

Copy for the next Newsletter to be with the editor, Jackie Curd by the 28th February 2023. Please let me know what is happening in your area. Articles and pictures to—JcurdMU@gmail.com. tel 07712432906

## News From The Branches

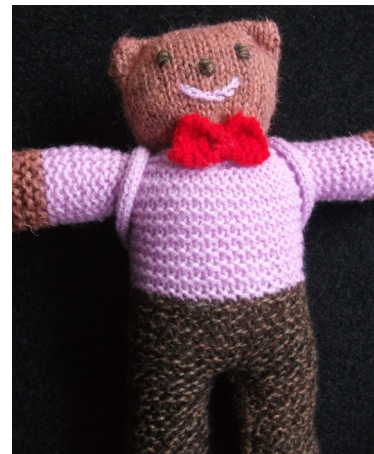


### New member enrolment at Tunstall

Howard Clarke, Wendy Court, June Gouge, Brenda Hammond, Margaret Playfoot, Rev Paula Jardine-Rose, Glynis Hills, Brenda Wood and Nuala Rosher. Wendy, June and Brenda are the members from St. Michaels branch which closed ; Howard, Margaret, Glynis, Brenda and Nuala are new members.

### Christmas Tree Festival – Tunstall

Mothers Union This year Tunstall Mothers' Union Christmas Tree was dedicated to Rita Pengelly with an AFIA theme. **Tree Decorated by Liz Stevens**



Bruno Worry Bear and Baby Loss Angels knitted by members of the Maidstone Archdeaconry and donated to the local Women's Refuge

## MARCH

*Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Lent. Traditionally, it was a day when children, mainly daughters, who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother and family and would take a Simnel Cake with them to celebrate. Some churches hold onto that tradition and provide Simnel Cake to the parish after the morning service. We also remember the fathers that have had to take on the role of 'mother' to his children due to many circumstances. We also remember our Mother Church.*

### Prayer:

Loving Father, we pray for those for whom Mothering Sunday is a time of heartache rather than celebration. We pray for those who have never known their mother or whose mothers have died  
We pray for those who long to be mothers but as yet have not had their own children  
We pray for those who struggle with the way their children have chosen to live their lives  
We pray for those who have a difficult relationship with their mother.  
We pray for those who stand helpless watching their loved ones suffer  
We pray for those sitting by the beds of loved ones who are dying  
May they have the comfort of knowing that your love for them is constant, your understanding is perfect, your compassion is Never ending.  
Loving God, we give you thanks for all who care for us, who have encouraged us and helped us grow, who have forgiven us, and cared for us when we are unwell, who have supported us when times were hard who have challenged us, who have told us about you. Thank you Lord.

AMEN



## Together in Prayer January, February, March 2023

Jean & John Sweetman & Margaret Horwood

It's a New Year! I wonder what it holds for us all. I'm sure there will be some good and some bad. Let's hope we can major on the good; the help we can give and receive; the kindnesses we can share; the example we show to others; our prayers for all those who matter to us and those we just feel called to pray for.

I was looking at some old Diocesan News Letters and found a prayer and I quote:-

### *Somebody prayed for me*

When my heart was so broken that I could not pray;  
When love wasn't easy to see,  
Someone was there, somebody cared,  
Somebody prayed for me.  
Somebody went to the throne of heaven;  
Somebody lifted my name,  
Bringing me into God's holy presence,  
Saying what I could not say.  
Somebody showed me the face of God's mercy  
When darkness was all I could see.  
Somebody pleaded the blood of Jesus,  
Somebody prayed for me.  
When the future looked hopeless, and I'd given up;  
When I had lost sight of my dreams.  
Someone drew near, dried every tear.  
Somebody prayed for me.





## JANUARY

**Corinthians 13:3-8 Love - And now I will show you the most excellent way...**

Because God loves me, He is slow to lose patience with me.

**Because God loves me, He takes the circumstances of my life and uses them in a constructive way for my growth.**

Because God loves me He is there for me. He wants to see me mature and develop in His love.

**Because God loves me, He does not send down His wrath on every little mistake I make, of which there are many.**

Because God loves me, He does not keep score of all my sins, and then beat me over the head with them whenever He gets the chance.

**Because God loves me, He is deeply grieved when I do not walk in the ways that please Him because He sees this as evidence that I don't trust Him and love Him as I should.**

Because God loves me, He keeps on trusting me when at times I don't trust myself.

**Because God loves me, He never says there is no hope for me; rather, He patiently works with me, loves me, and disciplines me in such a way that it is hard for me to understand the depth of His concern for me.**

Because God loves me, He never forsakes me even though many of my friends might.

**Because God loves me, He stands with me when I have reached the bottom of despair, when I see the real me and compare that with His righteousness, holiness, beauty, and love. It is at a moment like this that I can really believe that God loves me. Yes, the greatest of all gifts is God's perfect love!**



## FEBRUARY

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February we celebrate the special festival of Candlemas. The celebration marks the presentation of Jesus in the temple. This ancient festival reminds us that this day is the 40<sup>th</sup> day after Christmas when an aged priest named Simeon was on duty. He had been waiting for a special sign of the promised Messiah and in welcoming Jesus he said the special prayer known as the Nunc Dimittis when he described Jesus as being "a light to lighten the Gentiles". This was a special sign that Jesus was to become savior to the whole world.

So we pray:

Heavenly Father we thank you for the special way in which Jesus has let His special light to shine on people of every race, creed and tongue. We pray that we may be strengthened to share the light of Christ with those whom we meet and that it may be a special blessing for them and for us. We pray that this light may shine on folk beyond our own little circle.

February 14<sup>th</sup> is Valentine's Day when the tradition has grown of sending special cards and gifts to those we love. This reminds us that love is at the heart of the Christian faith and we are reminded that love is the greatest quality we can have so we pray:

Father God we thank you for the great gift of love which you showed by allowing your Son, Jesus Christ, to come and live among us and to die on the Cross for us. Help us to show that same love in our world and to respond by serving you in thought and word and deed.



In preparing this prayer I am reminded of the passage in 1 John chapter 4, verses 7 to 11 "Dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. Whoever

loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God for God is love. And God showed his love for us by sending His only Son into the world in order that we may have life through Him. This is what love is. It is not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven. Dear friends if that is how God loved us then we should love one another".

Later in February we come to Ash Wednesday and enter the season of Lent. During this time we are guided to make a special effort or to make a special sacrifice so we pray for God's guidance as to what special effort he wishes us to make in observing the Lenten season.