

Thoughts from your President, Maxine Paul

I do hope those of you who came enjoyed the service and AGM at the Cathedral last month. How lovely it was to see so many of you there and to come together to worship, to share what has been happening during the year and to look to the future. It was also such a privilege to have Bishop Lynne with us and to hear about how hard her experience was as a single mum in church. It was so inspirational that she was able to hold on in faith that "all will be well with God" to bring her to where she is today.

We are in the middle of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence and it is shame there is no formal prayer diary for the 16 days from Mary Sumner House, but I do hope that you have been able to use the prayers we have sent out via your branch leaders or join in on Facebook or WhatsApp. Do try to wear a purple domestic abuse awareness ribbon during this time. You may have been able to set up a "red chair" display at church – I was given the opportunity by my minister to speak about RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse as part of our Safeguarding Sunday service. I was also permitted to put a red chair in the room during Diocesan Synod on The Global Day of Action. Don't forget to ask if you can put your RISE UP posters in church or make peace doves to raise awareness of domestic abuse 365 days of the year as well during the 16 Days of Activism and even see if you can get your church to pledge its support too.



Advent is here as well. I know you will take some time to reflect, in between the carol services, mince pie-making, present-buying, as to why God had to send Jesus to us and that the wonder of Christmas is merely the beginning of the greatest of love stories that never ends.



Holy Jesus, by being born one of us, and lying humbly in a manger, you show how much God loves the world. Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts, until we reach our home in heaven, and see you on your throne of glory. Amen

May all the joys and blessings of the Season be yours and the peace and love of God go with you in 2024.

Love and blessings. Maxine x

AGM, Council and annual thanksgiving service

It was great to see so many members at our Annual General Meeting and Thanksgiving service on 13th November. Bishop Lynne Cullens gave a thought-provoking talk and President Maxine provided feedback on the Annual Gathering and the new RISE UP against domestic abuse campaign. You can view the impact video from the Annual Gathering which was shown at Council here [Annual Gathering 2023 | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](https://www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023)

All branch contacts should by now have received a branch pack containing your annual returns paperwork alongside a set of Roundabouts for your branch members. Please let Secretary Kathryn know if you haven't yet received yours. If you have any queries about the annual returns or need any help with your annual returns paperwork then please contact secretary@muchelmsford.org.uk or treasurer@muchelmsford.org.uk.

Clergy booklet

Our new diocesan MU booklet for clergy is now available to order. Please contact Secretary Kathryn if you have any new clergy or LLM in your area who you would like to order a copy for. If you hear of an installation service, even if it's not in your church, do try to attend and introduce yourself as a member of Mothers' Union or let Kathryn know and she will see if one of the Trustees is available to come along as well.

RISE UP campaign and 16 Days of Activism

The UN 16 Days of Activism began on 25th November and is running till 10th December. We are posting daily prayers and information on our Facebook page and Whatsapp prayer groups, promoting the 16 Days and the new MU RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse campaign. Further information and resources can be found at mothersunion.org/MUGlobalDay and <https://www.mothersunion.org/riseup>



Please continue to share with us any activities you are taking part in over the 16 Days so we can promote this more widely.



Christmas Prayers and Campaign

This year's Christmas Appeal launched on 28th November and is raising money to support the savings and credit skills training project in Tanzania. Any donations raised between 28th November and 5th December will be doubled through the Big Give Christmas Challenge (www.mothersunion.org/christmas23)

Christmas Prayers, Advent Prayer Resources and activities and an Advent Service are available on the central website produced by new Faith and Church Relations Manager, Ish Lennox [Our new Faith and Church Relations Manager and Advent Resources | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](http://mothersunion.org)

Do let us know anything you have planned over the Christmas period that we can promote to our members (secretary@muchelmsford.org.uk)

News from Mary Sumner House

- The Mothers' Union Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Britain is now on the central website [Mothers' Union Britain Safeguarding Policy and Procedure | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](http://mothersunion.org)
- For regular updates on central MU work, sign up to the central e-newsletter on this link: <https://mothersuniononline.org/p/1I8Y-G0K/sign-up-to-the-mothers-union-mailing-list>
- Members should now have received their Prayer Diaries. If any members have not received their copy then please contact Secretary Kathryn who will follow this up.

Dates for the dairy

- *16 Days of Activism* – 25th November to 10th December
- Dec 2023 - Dec 2024 RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse 365 days of the year
- St John's Epping Christmas Tree Festival – 1st-4th December
- Rainham Carol Service and 95th Anniversary Service, Wednesday 6th December, 2pm
- Barkingside, Holy Trinity with St Laurence Branch Annual Carol Service followed by tea & mince pies, Tuesday 12th December 2.30pm.
- Billericay branch Carols and Mince Pies, 13th December 2pm, Emmanuel Church
- Provisional Spring Members Meeting – evening of 5th June, Chapter House
- Provisional AGM and Annual Thanksgiving Service – 18th November, Cathedral