

Thoughts from your President, Maxine Paul

In some respects, January has been a very quiet month for me after all the busyness of last year, but it seems to be a month for meetings. This can be a bit tiresome, but, on the other hand, it is also inspiring to hear all that will be going on in MU in the future, particularly the new Provincial Gathering planned to replace the worldwide Annual Gathering for this year. It would be great if lots of us from Chelmsford were able to get to Oxford for the event and meet our fellow members from the southern part of the UK and share ideas. Please contact Secretary Kathryn if you are interested, as we have to let the organisers know numbers asap and if there are enough of us, we might even be able to hire a coach as we have in years gone by. Put Friday 22nd June 2024 in your diary and tell Kathryn.

Sadly, we lost two stalwart members of CDMU recently. Many of you will have known Brenda Russell and Di Bubb. Please pray for the repose of their souls and for their grieving families and give thanks for their lives of dedicated service to God through MU and their churches.

I have another cruise planned for Feb/March to Australia and The Philippines where we are looking forward to seeing our son again for a few days. My husband has promised me an internet package so I can keep in touch with CDMU – I'm even planning to write my next message from the ship! When we get back, I have a few spaces in my diary and would love to visit some branches again, especially those where I didn't see anyone during my *Summer of Hope* Challenge. Get in touch at president@muchelmsford.org.uk

Currently, I am helping with *Alpha* at church – again, but each time I get something else out of it. The latest video is so different, and, after just one session, I've come away with the words of Bear Grylls who says that his faith is not just a crutch to support him at difficult times, but is his very backbone of support at all times. How thankful I am to have Jesus in my life to support me in good times and bad.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Love and blessings. Maxine x

Elections

2024 is election year, the first stage of which is election of our DP for the 2025-2027 triennium. DP nomination forms are being circulated through branch leaders. Any candidate for DP will need 5 nominations and must submit these along with a CV to our returning officer, secretary Kathryn, by 10th March at the latest.

International Womens Day – 8th March

The theme of this year's International Women's Day is 'Inspiring Inclusion'. Mothers' Union will be showcasing how we ensure the needs, interests and aspirations of women and girls are valued and included. Dioceses have been encouraged to let the central communications team know any ways in which they are 'inspiring inclusion'. For more information visit: www.internationalwomensday.com

Make a Mother's Day

This year's Make a Mothers' Day campaign is 'Gifts of Dignity' focusing on MU work on Uganda. Ethical gifts can be purchased alongside a card (including an 'in memory' card). Please let the diocesan secretary know if any of your members have not yet received their ethical gifts booklet and appeal letter (sent out in January with the Spring retail catalogue).

RISE UP campaign and 16 Days of Activism

MU branches and their churches are encouraged to take part in the RISE UP challenge, working towards the bronze, silver, or gold RISE UP award www.mothersunion.org/riseup. Please let us know how your branch is progressing against the challenge. We will be featuring this in the next edition of Roundabout and also at the next Members meeting in June.



End of Year Returns

Don't forget your end of year returns need to be back by 10th March. Send them to our diocesan treasurer, Tricia McCarthy. Please get in touch with her or our secretary if you need any support.

With God nothing is impossible: Transformation – Now!

Spring edition of Connected – database deadline 7th February

The deadline for adding new information to the database prior to the Spring Connected mailing is 7th February. If you have new members for 2024 who are not yet on the central database or existing members whose details need updating, then please get in touch with the diocesan secretary secretary@muchelmsford.org.uk

Faith – Midday Prayers

Midday prayers are available daily on the central Facebook page and Mary Sumner House are also now streaming evening prayers and a reflection every Sunday on Facebook from 6pm www.facebook.com/MothersUnion.

Our Faith representative, Lucy Bubb, has recently joined the rota for leading MU Midday Prayers on Facebook. Her first time on the rota will be Thursday 21st February. Mary Sumner House are keen to involve more members in writing prayers or recording some of the daily prayer videos (training provided). If you are interested in being involved or have any questions about what this might entail then please contact Lucy on 07970 728673 or email lucy.bubb@btinternet.com

Friday 1st March is World Day of Prayer. The resources for this year's WDP were produced by an ecumenical group of Palestinian Christian women. Prayer resources and resources to facilitate a worship service can be viewed at www.wwdp.org.uk/2024-theme-and-country-palestine/

Lent Resources

The season of Lent begins on 14th February 2024. Last year a number of branches used the Metamorphosis Bitesize resource over Lent. If your branch is interested in using this resource it is still available through the Mothers' Union shop [Metamorphosis Bitesize Booklet – Mothers' Union Shop \(mueshop.org\)](http://Metamorphosis Bitesize Booklet – Mothers' Union Shop (mueshop.org))

A six-week Lenten course has also been produced by the Clewer Initiative which encourages individuals and churches to respond to modern slavery in their communities. The course materials are available at www.truefreedom24.com

News from Mary Sumner House

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>

Congratulations to our CEO, Bev Julien, who was recently installed as an Honorary Lay Canon by Bishop Alan at St Albans Cathedral, in recognition of all her work and ministry for Mothers' Union and in her local parish.

MU is holding a fringe event at the General Synod in London on 26th February. This lunchtime session will focus on **"Mothers' Union (MU) – here for you!"** and will speak to the impact of MU in the Community highlighting our RISE UP campaign and how we are here to support clergy and the Church in the delivery of their mission. An exciting opportunity for MU to showcase the importance of our work and our value as an integral part of the Anglican church.

Dates for the dairy

- Jan 2024 - Dec 2024 RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse 365 days of the year
- 21st February – Lucy Bubb leads Midday Prayers on Facebook
- 1st March - *World Day of Prayer*
- 10th March – deadline for End of Year Returns
- 1st April - *Roundabout* article deadline - email roundabout@muchelmsford.org.uk
- 5th June (evening) - Provisional Spring Members Meeting, Chapter House
- 22nd June - Provisional date for Canterbury Provincial Gathering
- 18th November - Provisional AGM and Annual Thanksgiving Service, Cathedral