**Thoughts from your President, Maxine Paul**

Dear Members and Friends,

I have been so busy getting back into the swing of MU after Christmas and New Year and preparing for the up-coming Members’ Days that I almost forgot to write my February message to you all! In the course of my preparations, I am updating the display boards for 2023 and it has given me much food for thought (and inspiration for this letter!) Looking at our diocesan projects and our plans for “Re-imagining MU”, I realise yet again that God is so good.

It has been announced today, that “English for Women” has been awarded a National Lottery Community Grant for the next five years which will make it a lot more viable. We will still need your support for the day-to-day running costs, which are not insignificant amounts, but the grant will, at least, enable us to continue with the services of the co-ordinator, Susannah, who remains key to management and further development. They have also heard that the YMCA will include them in their refurbishment plans rather than us having to find new premises.

Trinity Child Contact Centre has also been awarded a Ministry of Justice Grant through CAFCAS (Children’s and Families Courts Advisory Service) making the finances very comfortable for the foreseeable future. Do tell people about us – we still have room for some more clients.

The AFIA committee have met with our new rep, Margaret Harvey, and applications are again being considered. As there has been no spending for two years, the fund is good, but your continuing donations will mean more holidays can be awarded.

We therefore progress with one of our “Re-imagining MU” hopes in helping to support our projects better, but please do not ease up in your generous giving to the Diocesan Fund and consider volunteering to help at any of the settings. We may even be able to extend our scope to other projects.

All of this is underpinned by prayer – yours and mine. God is indeed very good and these blessings indicate that He very much wants us to continue on our journey in Mary Sumner’s Footsteps.

Love and blessings

Maxine x

**Members Days**

Our next Members Day event is taking place on 13th February from 7:30pm at St Nicholas Church, Kelveden Hatch. The event is a ‘Reimagining MU cocktail evening’ and will be an opportunity for members to worship together, hear more from our DP Maxine Paul about this year’s theme, and join in some cocktail making. Please let the diocesan secretary know as soon as possible if you or any of your members are planning to attend (secretary@muchelmsford.org.uk)

**Mothering Sunday**

This year’s Make a Mothers’ Day Appeal will focus on Gifts of Perseverance to support women, families and communities in Burundi and other places we work. The website [www.makeamothersday.org](http://www.makeamothersday.org) will be available to view from 10th February and appeal packs should also arrive around the same date.

**Metamorphosis bitesize**

If your branch is planning to run Metamorphosis bitesize, MSH are holding a Zoom session on the second Tuesday of every month at 2pm to provide an overview of the Metamorphosis session. The next sessions are scheduled for 14th February, 14th March and 11th April. The Zoom meeting ID is: 839 0360 2897 and the passcode is 610193. Please contact development@mothersunion.org with any questions.

**Epping Thrive Project for survivors of domestic abuse**

On 27th January, members from across the diocese joined in Holy Trinity and St Laurence branch’s Zoom meeting where Phillis from Epping gave an inspiring talk about the project her church has set up working with survivors of domestic abuse. Members can follow the work of this group on Instagram @thrive.survivors.group or Facebook [(20+) Thrive Survivors Group | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ThriveSurvivorsGroup). We hope to hear more about this project at our Council meeting in May.

**Modern Day Slavery**

The Clewer Initiative are offering another awareness raising session on County Lines for Parents, Grandparents and Guardians on 23rd February 10:30-11:30. To book on this session please go to [**https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/491696777297**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/491696777297)

The Clewer Initiative are also launching ‘Journeys’ their new Lent course for 2023. The five-week course will be based on the “Stations of the Cross”. It can be used in small groups, individual study or online. Visit <https://theclewerinitiative.org/blog/its-a-wrap> to find out more.

**Diocesan data protection procedures**

Trustees have recently reviewed and updated the diocese Fair Processing Notice for data handling. The new notice is available to view at<https://muchelmsford.org.uk/fair-processing-notice/>

**Central Mailings**

Any new member details or change of address details for existing members need to be sent to the Diocesan Secretary (secretary@muchelmsford.org.uk) by 15th February in order to make the Spring Connected and Summer of Hope mailings deadline. Please let the Diocesan Secretary know if any member is not receiving their central mailings.

**News from Mary Sumner House**

The monthly Indoor Members Prayer Circle reflection is attached to this newsletter.

**Dates for the dairy**

* Rearranged MU Cocktail evening at Kelveden Hatch – 13th February 2023
* May Council – evening of 24th May in the Chapter House
* Tickets for the Annual Gathering in York on Friday 22nd September are now on sale - <https://www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023>