

Thoughts from your President, Maxine Paul

As promised, I am writing this on board our cruise ship, Arcadia, in the middle of the Coral Sea to the east of Australia, *en route* to Port Douglas and The Great Barrier Reef. So far, we have visited Sydney and seen all the notable sights and Brisbane where we got up close to some of the native animals, as you do! I could quite easily just fill the whole newsletter with my lovely photos of God's wonderful creations, but, in this day and age, I am guessing that lots of you will already have done something like this for yourselves.



We have joined a round-the-world cruise for the Sydney to Hong Kong leg, disembarking in The Philippines to visit our son. Many of our fellow travellers have been on board since Southampton and have carved out a pattern of life, so it was a treat to be invited to join the Christian Fellowship group on sea days for a mixture of teaching, praising and lots of prayer for our fellow passengers, those we know and the world we are passing through.

How wonderful it is, as well, that the internet helps us to keep in touch across many thousands of miles right to the other side of the globe even out in the vastness of the oceans – another gift from God. I even managed to watch Lucy Bubb leading MU Middy Prayers on Facebook – well done Lucy.



In Manila, I am hoping to visit the Purple Community Fund Project which many of you in the Billericay area will know and collect ring pulls to help them with the bags and jewellery they make and sell to survive. Jane Walker, the project leader, from UK will be speaking at our "Friday Evening Zoom" on 22nd March. To find out more and how you can support them too join in at: Meeting ID: 876 2744 7494 Passcode: 519868
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87627447494?pwd=TI8jv2YhfKOqp9ZebBtdPsc97WMDfu.1>

Being Lent, I came armed with suitable study material – The Diocese Lent study "Travelling Well Together" <https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/about-us/travelling-well-together> seemed appropriate, and I receive the C of E Lent reflections, "Watch and Pray" straight to my phone each morning (well, evening here!) <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-calling/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/watch-and-pray-lent-reflections>, but I am finding it surprisingly difficult to concentrate and am easily distracted by the beauty of my surroundings or, indeed, just enjoying my leisure time too much. How lovely it was then, to receive the Lent reflection video from MU on their Facebook page this morning which included some relaxing music, short readings and prayers and lots of time for my own thoughts <https://www.facebook.com/MothersUnion/> (every Sunday for the 6 Sundays of Lent). There is so much out there that we can tap into wherever we are in the world. You could also try out a session or two from the *Metamorphosis Bite-size* course in your branches during Lent – get in touch with VP Rose (vp.rose@muchelmsford.org.uk) for more information.

So, even though I am round the other side of the world and upside-down, you can rest assured that I am keeping in touch and CDMU is always in my thoughts and prayers.

God of the journey, you invite us to travel well together as the body of Christ in the Diocese of Chelmsford: enlarge our hearts with an awareness of your grace, the knowledge of your presence, and an openness to your calling, that, with gratitude for the past, we may step out with confidence into your future; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, Amen (Travelling Well Together)

Love and blessings.
Maxine x

Elections

A reminder that **10th March** is the deadline for Diocesan President nominations to be received for the 2025-2027 triennium. Nominations should be submitted to our returning officer, secretary Kathryn, along with a CV (secretary@muchelmsford.org.uk)

Make a Mother's Day

This year's Make a Mothers' Day campaign is focussing on 'Gifts of Dignity'. Ethical gifts can be purchased alongside a card (including an 'in memory' card). The central website also has a range of free Mothering Sunday resources with service ideas, crafts, sermons and prayers: www.mothersunion.org/make-mothers-day-2024

RISE UP campaign and 16 Days of Activism

On 26th February MU ran a successful fringe event at General Synod centred on the RISE UP campaign against domestic abuse. 25 attendees, including the Archbishops of Canterbury and York joined MSH staff, WWP Sheran Harper, PP Kathryn Anderson, and Zonal Trustee Julia Jamieson to hear about RISE UP and the wider impact we have supporting the clergy and community in Britain & Ireland. For more information about RISE UP and the new RISE UP challenge, visit www.mothersunion.org/riseup.



Christmas Appeal

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Mothers' Union Christmas appeal. Over £110k was raised through this appeal for savings groups in Tanzania.

Lent resources

New Lent resources are available on the central website, including a Lent calendar full of everyday reminders of how we can serve and bless those around us near and far [Welcome to Lent | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](http://www.mothersunion.org). The new Faith and Church Relations Manager, Ish Lennox, has also written a thought-provoking piece for the season Lent.

Lady Day – 8th April

This year Lady Day will be celebrated on April 8th. A Lady Day service plan can be found at <https://www.mothersunion.org/sites/default/files/resources/public/Lady%20Day%202024.pdf>

Provincial Gathering – 22nd June

The Provincial Gathering is scheduled for Saturday 22nd June in Oxford (venue tbc). It is anticipated that tickets will go on sale through Eventbrite in March and will be available up to end of May. Do please continue to let secretary Kathryn know if you are planning to attend.

News from Mary Sumner House

The Spring edition of Connected should be with members by 26th March. Please contact secretary Kathryn if you or anyone in your branch has not received this by end of March. 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>

Dates for the dairy

- Jan 2023 - Dec 2024 RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse 365 days of the year
- 8th March - International Womens Day (www.internationalwomensday.com)
- 1st April - Roundabout article deadline - email roundabout@muchelmsford.org.uk
- 8th April - Lady Day
- Thy Kingdom Come – 9th -19th May <https://www.mothersunion.org/ThyKingdomCome>
- 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