

# IN TOUCH

with the Mothers' Union in Connor Diocese

SPRING 2021

**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

Diocese of Connor

[www.connormothersunion.org](http://www.connormothersunion.org)

## Dear Fellow Members

This beautiful photograph of a tortoiseshell butterfly was one of the entries from Connor in the All-Ireland photographic competition held last year. This butterfly can be seen from early spring to late autumn. While the upper surface of its wings is vividly marked, the underneath is drab, providing camouflage. When closed, their wings look like leaves helping them to hide. When discovered, they flick their wings open to reveal bright colours which often scare a predator, giving the tortoiseshell butterfly ample time to escape. It has a wingspan of 4.5 cm and is particularly fast moving. Adult butterflies drink nectar from flowers as the one in the photo is doing.

This tiny butterfly is one of the many beauties of God's creation which we often take for granted. Might I encourage you when you are out for your daily exercise, to look around you and praise God for all the wonders he has created.

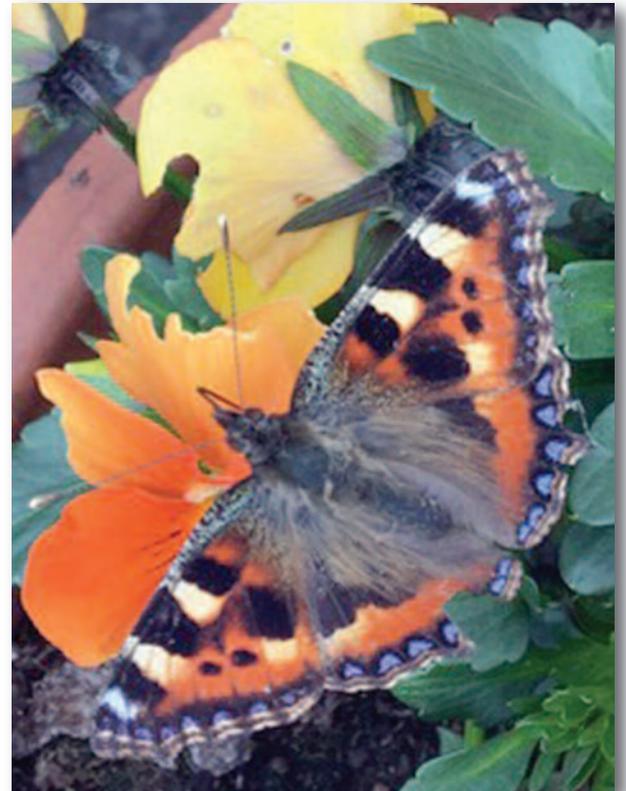
During lockdown MU members have been busy knitting and making up washbags. You will see photographs of some of their efforts in this magazine. We have done an audit of items sent to hospitals and other places, and it has been amazing to discover the numbers that have been sent. A very big thank you to you all.

It would be wrong to think that MU activities have stopped this year. We had five Area Sharing Sessions via Zoom recently and discovered many innovative events that had taken place. Members have met online and had virtual coffee mornings and afternoon teas. Many doorstep visits (at a safe distance) have



happened and of course there have been countless telephone calls.

We are very grateful to Dean Forde for allowing us to have an online Festival Service this year. I do hope you were able to see it. It was lovely to welcome June Butler, our All-Ireland President as preacher on



this occasion.

June is also undertaking to walk 21 kilometres in each diocese to raise money for Mums in May. If you haven't already sponsored her you will find the relevant information on the website.

Now for an update on our granddaughter Saoirse. She has really grown and although we haven't seen her for over a year now, we speak regularly via WhatsApp – she thinks grandma and papa live on the television. She is a real chatterbox and has surprised us with some of the words she has said – for example 'hexagon'. She loves to show us her different toys, is very lively and cheerful and enjoys colouring. She adores the cat and enjoys her visits to the local park. We hope to be able to visit around her second birthday in July.

Wishing you God's richest blessings.

*All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.*

**Mrs C.F. Alexander**

With my love,

*Sally x*

# In Touch with the Diocese

## Thanksgiving and Commissioning Service



A Service of Thanksgiving and Commissioning was held on Sunday 25 October, in All Saints' Parish Church, Antrim.

The service was conducted by Connor MU Chaplain, Archdeacon Stephen McBride, assisted by Claire Thompson, who is in training for the Local Ordained Ministry. Our new bishop, Rt Rev George Davison gave the address. We were pleased that our All-Ireland President June Butler was able to be present, as well as former Diocesan Presidents Norma Bell and Valerie Ash.

Referring to the Old Testament lesson, Joshua 1:1-19, the bishop drew our attention to the challenges that Joshua faced. The advice he was given, to be strong and courageous and to step out in faith to lead the people, was very appropriate for all in leadership in MU at present. Whilst the pandemic presents us with unprecedented challenges, MU must rise above them. The bishop encouraged members not to be daunted by their new roles, especially in these times when we must all be more resilient and imaginative. He reminded us that we are not alone, and that as God was with Joshua, the same God goes with us into the future with all its uncertainties.

The service was brought to a fitting close by our Diocesan President, Sally Cotter, who thanked all those who had taken part and addressed those watching and listening online, after what had been a most inspiring and uplifting time.

## Worldwide Update – Spring 2021

HOW ARE YOU? This is probably the most asked question in the last year. It has been a difficult year for everyone, more so for some than others. But now we have a brighter future to look forward to. I hope you have had your vaccine and if you have been living alone you have support.

Covid 19 has affected people worldwide so I wonder if I asked Mothers' Union members worldwide this question what the reply would be. Many members are facing challenges with medical care, lack of vaccine etc. along with the other challenges they already face.

I took part in the YM Zoom Breakfast in February. It was an excellent event with two very interesting speakers. I was particularly interested in the information given to us by Lydia Monds, who works as the educational advisor to the Bishops' Appeal in Ireland. Lydia has visited many countries in which Mothers' Union programmes are working.

Over the last year the importance of education here has really been highlighted. Lydia was able to inform us how the Mothers' Union programmes were making a difference to the lives of people in some countries.

- In Burundi she sat in Literacy circles watching girls who had to leave school early being taught to grow crops and create small

businesses as a result of the numeracy training.

- In Ethiopia she again sat in the literacy circles. The people are finding that foreign nationals are buying up the land.
- In refugee camps, she found Mothers' Union were providing Peace and Reconciliation Courses, and so the refugees were able to live together more peacefully. Many of the refugees from South Sudan had received counselling and information about coping with the impending migration from members of Mothers' Union.
- In the DRC some places have 100% physical or sexual violence. Mothers' Union offers counselling for trauma and war.
- People in Guyana being encouraged to look at problems from "what we do NOT have" to "what we DO have" through the work of the Church and Community Mobilisation Process, or Awaken.

So thank you to all who are supporting this great work financially. I finish with a quote from Lydia:

***"You are your greatest resource, You do not diminish in value"***

To watch Lydia and gain more information about MU programmes, visit the [www.mothersunion.ie](http://www.mothersunion.ie) site.

**Valerie Ash (Diocesan Worldwide Contact)**

## Connor Mothers' Union to the Rescue

In Mid-January Connor MU received a request from the C of I Chaplain in the RVH and Musgrave Park Hospitals, Sanna Mallon, to help with providing emergency washbags for patients. Sanna said: "More and more patients are coming into these hospitals and have not even a toothbrush with them. Sometimes they have to wait a week for their loved ones or a family member to bring a washbag."

MU members around the diocese responded quickly with 75 packs ready to deliver and are continuing to supply more bags. Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Connor MU Chaplain, kindly agreed to hand over the wash bags to Sanna at Musgrave Park Hospital.



# In Touch with the Branches

*"She spins her own thread and weaves her own cloth. She is generous to the poor and needy". (Proverbs 31:19-30)*

## Lisburn Cathedral



Jean Hughes, a member of Lisburn Cathedral branch, knit these 50 beautiful jumpers for Baby Basics, who were delighted to receive so many.

## Christ Church, Lisburn



Christ Church MU members have been busy knitting 23 baby blankets for Baby Basics and supplying enough items to Valerie Christie for 50 wash bags (25 female and 25 male) and 4 fiddle muffs which were delivered to Lagan Valley Hospital A&E.



## St. John's, Ballyclare

An avid knitter from St. John's, Ballyclare MU, Anna Millar, knit 24 Trauma Teddies and 18 premature baby jackets for Antrim Area Hospital.

The "Pins and Needles" Group in Killead & Gartree MU and members from St. Jude's, Muckamore, knit these beautiful items for the Premature Baby Unit in Antrim Area Hospital.



## St. Jude's, Muckamore

St. Jude's MU members donated toys at Christmas to the Muckamore Parish Development Association for children in the local community.

Pictured (L. to R) – Margaret Johnston, Irene Paget (Branch Chair), Joan Currie, Ellen McKelvey and Beth Ramsey.





Ballymoney Finroy and Rasharkin MU Branch responded generously to the appeal from Sanna Mallon, Chaplain at the Royal Victoria and Musgrave Park Hospitals, by supplying items for 75 wash bags. A great effort from such a small branch.

## Teddies for Baby Basics

Margaret Mitchell from Ballymoney, Finroy and Rasharkin MU branch, has been keeping herself busy during lockdown by knitting 160 teddies for Baby Basics as well as baby cardigans and hats for the premature baby units.

(Far left) – Margaret is pictured with the teddies.

(Left) – Roslyn Graham, Branch Chair, handing over her mother Margaret Mitchell's teddies to Karen Webb from Baby Basics.



## Agherton Parish MU, Portstewart

In September the ladies of Agherton MU enjoyed a very interesting, socially distanced, tour of their home town. The tour was given by local tour guide, Nigel Handforth, who informed them of many fascinating facts, past and present, on the history of the town and points of note. Everyone got a much better understanding of the development of Portstewart from a fishing village to a tourist resort.



## '21 in 21' Sponsored Walk for Mums in May

Our All-Ireland President, June Butler, is planning 3X7 kilometre walks in each diocese in Ireland, to raise money for Mums in May. June is hoping that members will sponsor her, on her 252 kilometre walk. Individual and Branch Sponsorship Forms will be available through your branch, and on the All-Ireland website. You can make a difference – every little helps!



(Left) – Martha Rainey (St. Patrick's MU, Ballymena) celebrated her 90th Birthday on February 15, 2021.

(Right) – Also celebrating her 90th Birthday was Dorothy Hegan (St. Patrick's MU, Ballymena) on 10th March 2020.



Items for In Touch to be sent to Sally Cotter at [mupresident.connor@gmail.com](mailto:mupresident.connor@gmail.com)