

IN TOUCH

with the Mothers' Union in Connor Diocese

AUTUMN 2022

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of Connor

www.connormothersunion.org



Lord God

**We thank you for the dedicated life of service
of our beloved queen.**

**We were blessed by the strength of her faith,
her commitment to family life and duty,
her compassion and concern for lives
and leaders around the globe.**

**We pray for her legacy among us,
that we may continue to be inspired by all she did,
carrying with us both acceptance and determination
in the face of a changing and challenging world.**

**In the name of your son, Jesus Christ,
her great inspiration.**

Amen

Dear Fellow Members

Thursday 8 September will be a date none of us will forget. The passing of our late Queen after 70 years as monarch saw the leaders of many nations of the world gathering in London to pay their respects at her funeral. It was clear that she had been a major world figure and that there was a real sense that a significant era was coming to an end.

We thank God for the life and witness of our late Patron, for her grace and wisdom, her strength and fortitude and for the guidance she provided throughout her long reign to people of many countries and of all ages. We thank God also for her long connection with Mothers' Union and for the inspiring role that she played.

In one of her most famous addresses, given on her 21st birthday, she made a memorable commitment: "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service."

What her life meant for all men and women of faith was of supreme importance. She showed that it was possible to be in the public eye and yet remain a committed Christian in her private life. In a secular age she was an unashamed follower of Jesus Christ. She had a faith to share, and she shared it simply.

In the informality of her Christmas broadcasts, she reinforced both her devotion to the nation as sovereign and her relationship to Christ. In 2011 she spoke about forgiveness lying at the heart of the Christian faith. It can

heal broken families; it can restore friendships and can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love. This love is for everyone.

At the start of the first Covid lockdown, on 5 April 2020 she showed her ability to empathize and gave us hope when it was most needed. "We will meet again," she told us.

During the summer, we celebrated her life and work over the 70 long years of her reign. To our surprise and delight she appeared on the balcony at the end of the pageant, waving and smiling, and enjoying every moment.

Who can forget our last glimpse of Her Majesty, sitting down to tea and marmalade sandwiches with Paddington Bear? As Paddington said: "Thank you for everything." What a delightful way to remember our sovereign of over 70 years!

She was unique, she was faithful, she will be greatly missed.

With my love,

Sally x

Mothers' Union Annual Gathering 2022



St. Polycarp's MU members enjoying the day.



(Above) – Ballyclare MU members at the Waterfront Hall.

(Centre) – Bishops George Davison, Andrew Forster and David McClay

TRANSFORMATION NOW!

This wonderful week-end of celebration, renewing friendships and hearing about the continuing work of the MU worldwide began with two uplifting services in St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. The celebrant at both services was the Right Reverend George Davison, Bishop of Connor and the guest choir was Kerygma Choir. The thought provoking and inspiring sermons were given by the Right Reverend Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. He likened the MU to a stone in the shoe. He referred to the many initiatives started by the MU which like an uncomfortable stone have challenged the church and are the agents of transformation.

During the service, in an act of remembrance, a candle was lit and silence held as the life and reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was recalled in thanksgiving.

The conference section of the Gathering was conducted in the Waterfront Hall and was opened with a welcome from CEO Bev Jullien, AI President June Butler and Zonal Representative Irish Suitor. The opening prayers were conducted by the Bishop of Down & Dromore, the Right Reverend David McClay using the text 'You are the salt of the earth'. Through the wonders of technology the World Wide President, Sheran Harper, spoke virtually to the assembled members emphasising the need for transformation. She stressed that after the inactivity caused by Covid-19 this was the season for MU to transform lives.

Midday worship was led by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Reverend John McDowell who caught everyone's attention with the words from St. John's Gospel, Ch. 12:21 'Sir we would see Jesus'.

With MSH updates, examples of what MU is doing now and plans for the future this was an exciting meeting and was beautifully closed with the thoughtful prayers of the Bishop of Connor.

Bishops Visit Connor Diocese

The bishops of Ibba and Yei Dioceses, both in South Sudan, who had attended the Lambeth Conference, were also able to visit Connor Diocese.



Bishop Kamani and Mama Agnes in Ballyrashane & Kildollagh Parishes.

The MU in Ballyrashane & Kildollagh Parishes hosted a tea party of Bishop Kamani (Ibba Diocese) and his wife Mama Agnes following a retreat to Rathlin Island earlier in the day.

Through an invitation from CIMS Bishop Levi (Yei Diocese) and his wife, also called Mama Agnes, visited Agherton Parish. MU members were able to show examples of the many projects the branch supports. Mama Agnes is the MU DP in Yei.



Mama Agnes meeting Mothers' Union members.

Our Queen – Jean

Coleraine MU held a Jubilee Celebration tea party in St. Andrew's Parish Hall. All members past, present and friends were invited for tea, cake music and chat. The oldest branch member is Jean Nesbitt who was born on the same day as the late Queen Elizabeth. Jean is in the photograph cutting the anniversary cake.



A Life and Reign Remembered

St. Mark's Ballysillan, MU Branch had a special Jubilee afternoon tea with thanks to the church organist, Mr. Jack McLaren. Jack had prepared a programme of hymns, songs, verse and a few 'Did You Know' questions about the late Queen's life which were greatly enjoyed by everyone as was the tea and cake.



130th anniversary

Ramoan & Culfeightrin MU celebrated the 130th anniversary of the branch with a prayer walk in Ballycastle, organised by Mrs. Sharon Wilson, followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre. The branch was formed in 1892 and is the oldest in Connor Diocese with the first meeting taking place at 34 Quay Road. The most senior branch member is Mrs. Gina Wysner.



Platinum Jubilee

A very special tea party was held in honour of the late Queen Elizabeth for her Platinum Jubilee in Christ Church, Ballynure.



Sandwiches, tray bakes and a Jubilee cake were enjoyed. Indoor members were not forgotten as they received a gift bag and flowers. To make the day complete there was a surprise visit by royalty.



(Above, left) – A Royal welcome.
(Left) – Tea and cakes.

A Double Celebration

St. Jude's MU hosted a tea party for indoor and senior members in honour of the late Queen's Jubilee and an early 100th birthday. Irene Paget warmly welcomed everyone and introduced a short act of worship. Heather Murdock read from the scriptures and Karen Moore gave a short reflection and led the prayers. Eva Baxter BEM told the story of Mary Sumner from her childhood years through word, song and poetry. Mrs. Jean Jackson, who celebrated her 100th birthday in July, cut the Jubilee cake.



(Above) – Jean marking the occasion with DP Sally, Area Chair Irene and AI Indoor Member Contact Norma Bell.

Cloughfern MU

The Cloughfern members had worked hard to knit and sew these lovely items as well as filling many washbags for the Antrim Area Hospital.



Mission Accomplished

Photographed are some of the many items the Pins & Needles Group of Killead & Gartree MU had knit and sewed for Baby Basics and the Mission to Seamen.



St. Mark's Ballysillan

The members of St. Mark's MU were delighted to meet the C of I Hospital Chaplain to the RVH and Musgrave Park Hospitals, Mrs. Sanna Mallon. Sanna gave a very informative talk about her work especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hospital work is demanding for all the staff and chaplains but was even more so during the height of the pandemic.

At the meeting members were able to hand over washbags for the A&E Department and knitwear for the neo-natal units, some of which came from St. Matthew's branch members.



90 Years Young

Cathedral branch member Joan Allen enjoyed her 90th birthday with fellow members. She was delighted to receive cards from WWP Sheran, AIP June and DP Sally.



Trustee & Executive Prayer Walk

On a lovely evening in Broughshane the T&Ex walked around the town stopping to have meaningful prayers along the way. The walk was arranged by Joyce Bond, Coordinator of the Faith & Policy Unit and DP Sally later entertained everyone to supper.



T&Ex gathering before the walk.

Shop for Christmas

Pictured are just some of the lovely cards and gifts available from MU Enterprises. Please contact the Diocesan Enterprise Contact, Angela at mue.connormothersunion@gmail.com



Late News

All members will have received copies of Connected and the Prayer Diary for the 16 Days of Activism. The Prayer Diary for 2023 will shortly be available and the Annual Report can be downloaded. These are wonderful resources and should be used in your branch to promote the work of the MU.

The Worldwide Fund – Please consider branch and individual donations to this fund. Thanks to all who donate so generously – Valerie Ash (WW Contact)

Items for In Touch to be sent to Sally Cotter at:
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