

Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane with Diocese of Brechin

Dear Friends

As this is the first issue of a new year, may I wish you all happiness and health for the months that lie ahead. We've just welcomed Jesus as the Prince of Peace again into our beautiful but fractured world, but everything is in a state of change whether it be the implications of Brexit; Mr Trump in the States as he tries to make good his electoral promises; the refugee crisis and wars in the Middle East and changes to the Mothers' Union! Oh dear, is nothing sacred?

I hope that you have all heard about the proposed changes to the Constitution and have been able to comment on it within your groups. After 100 years, it is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be rewritten to suit our present day workings and structure. Within the dioceses we too have been looking how best to work and how we might go forward in the future, so some branches for example are changing to Fellowship groups and we are still debating whether or not to follow the example of Ross Cloyne and Cork in Ireland as we discussed with you all last year. One of the decisions that we have come too is that we shall only have one Council a year instead of two, and this year, it will be held in St Ninian's in June. As we were unable to book the Charity Shop for this year, we have asked that you do a fundraising event instead, and maybe link it to the Lady Day Service, to be held in your branches. Sadly there hasn't been enough support to make that a Diocesan event practical this year.

But it was lovely to see so many present for the commissioning of Nerys and myself – we are official now!

I live under the flight path of the Pink Legged Geese. I love to see them honk and flap their wings across the sky. Thousands come in to spend their winters somewhere warmer and then they go again in the spring to breed in cooler Northern climes. If you look up and watch them you will see that they take it in turn to lead the skein, and being an MU member, I think, is a bit like that as we all have a part to play – from the very active member to the housebound one who faithfully fulfils our central object of praying – a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer.

May God bless you all and pray for me as I do for you.

Elizabeth

**Christian Concern for Families
World-wide**

through

**PRAYING – ENABLEING -
CAMPAIGNING**

It's the Mothers' Union at work!

The Commissioning Day



Isabelle Pottinger writes: On Tuesday 13th December, over twenty of us gathered at the Lady Chapel of St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth for a joyful and important occasion, the commissioning by Bishop David of Rev. Nerys Brown as Diocesan Chaplain and Elizabeth Benton as Diocesan President.

We were reminded that each office carries great responsibility, for the Mothers' Union (with around four million members worldwide) is a worldwide society within the Church, with special concern for all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life. In a beautiful service of prayer and dedication we welcomed our new Chaplain and Diocesan President and promised them our loyal support and encouragement. Towards the end of the service, in an atmosphere of song, all present came forward to light a candle.

Refreshments after the service gave us a chance to congratulate Nerys and Elizabeth, our new Office Bearers, and catch up on each other's news.

Bishop David's Retirement

As you all know by now that Bishop David has announced his retirement and we send him and Alison our love and very best wishes for a long and happy time ahead enjoying their family and grandchildren in particular. We shall miss them both.

Ideas For Mothering Sunday

Do you want ideas for Intercessions, Sunday schools, service outlines and talks on Mothering Sunday? Well the Mothers' Union has it organised to save you some time. Just go to their Mothering Sunday resource page on their website.

<http://www.mothersunion.org/resources#overlay-context=our-focus/mothering-sunday>

If you would like to 'Make a Mothers Day' by buying an ethical gift for your mother or any family member or in memory of your mother, you will receive a card to pass on, or have your mothers name here written in a book in the chapel at Mothers' Union headquarters.

Need Cards

As you know we are celebrating Lady Day at Branch Level and will not be meeting until the Diocesan Council meeting in June, unless you are coming to Charmian's Daffodil coffee morning.



I am not going to have the opportunity to sell Easter or Mothering Sunday cards face to face. So I am not buying any unless requested but am very happy to do that & send them out to the branch or individual. I do have a number of old Easter & Mothering Sunday cards which I am happy to sell for 10p each.

For Mary Sumner Day, in August, I will have the 2018 diaries & Christmas cards.

Sue Hoare

Daffodil Coffee Morning

Charmian Paterson is holding her usual Daffodil Coffee Morning at Garton Bank Coupar Angus on Thursday, April 20th to which we are all invited.

Come and enjoy a happy morning and there will be an opportunity to buy MU Cards as well as other goodies!



Constitution Consultation

Lynne Tembey writes: Thank you for your responses, for your openness, honesty and all you have shared and suggested within your feedback. Please be assured that everything received has been valued: your willingness to share your thoughts, your concerns, but above all, your faithful support and especially seeing the need for change. Thank you for being willing to walk this part of our Mothers' Union journey. I look forward to our further journeying together.

Thoughts For Lent From Nerys

This year, for the first time in my life, I will be attending a formal St David's Day dinner and I'm not sure how I feel about it! In the Wales of my childhood, the day was a fairly sober occasion, marked by a school or church service, a concert or an *eisteddfod*. This was in keeping, not only with our culture, but also with the traditions about St David that had come down to us. In his medieval life, he is pictured as the head of a community which spent long hours in silent meditation, worked the land and existed on vegetables, bread and water. It was a harsh regime, and yet, the image I have of Dewi is not of a miserable killjoy, but of a man of great

humility who deeply loved and trusted our Lord. In his last sermon, he urged his followers to be joyful, to keep their faith and to do the little things that they had seen and heard him do.

This Lent, we are once more called to faithfully set off on a journey through the harsh landscape of the desert. It's a place where there's nowhere to hide, where it's not possible to pretend, where we have to be honest and face up to uncomfortable truths about ourselves, to revisit past hurts and failures, broken relationships, feelings of guilt and grief and to be ready to be confronted by inner conflict. But we don't journey alone. We follow in the footsteps of Jesus with God's spirit in our hearts. And when, in that harsh place, we bring our sorrows and desires, our hopes and fears to our heavenly Father, transformation happens. The place of hardship becomes a place of hope. We are given peace and we experience the deep joy of knowing that we are beloved children of God.

It is that joy that David wished his followers to know, an uncontainable joy which draws others to its source. My prayer for us as members of the Mothers Union, is that at the end of our Lenten journey this year, we will emerge from the desert better prepared to do whatever it is that God is calling us to do. We will be stronger people with softer hearts, more vulnerable, more trusting, enjoying a closer relationship with our heavenly Father and a deeper understanding of his message of love to us in Jesus.

Away From It All or AFIA

One of the ways that Mother's Union can help families is by providing financial assistance for those experiencing difficulties, who would benefit from having time away together. AFIA grants are provided according to need and are available for a huge variety of families or groups, regardless of faith or religious affiliation.



AFIA grants may be used for group holidays, single family holidays, short breaks, day trips or travel expenses to visit family members living elsewhere. In order to spread our finite monies across as many applicants as possible, individual families are encouraged to apply only once.

Some organisations use the funds for day trips to the coast, entry to a zoo or amusement park or an outing to the pantomime. Fund recipients are encouraged to provide feedback about their holiday; their experiences show how valuable and life enhancing it can be to have a break from the stress of everyday life. AFIA grants are one of Mother's Unions greatest gifts for families who just need to get away from it all. If you know of anyone who would benefit from time away with their family please contact the Diocesan AFIA co-ordinator Valerie Walker (revalerian@gmail.com, tel 01337 842799)