

SWANSEA AND BRECON MU NEWS

Issue 359

February 2021



THE EDITOR. Welcome to the first issue for 2021. Currently, the vaccine is being rolled out and we can see light at the end of the tunnel, but it is a long tunnel, with more weeks of lockdown. For this reason, I have included two items from the MU resource “Prayer with Purpose” - a Template for Prayer and Praying at Home. In addition, there is an item to promote well being from “Resources to build hope and confidence” – the 5C’s: Control, Care, Continuity, Creativity and Compassion. I hope you will find these helpful.

Keep safe and well.

Kay

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Items for the next issue
to be sent to
warrington.k@sky.com
by 22 February 2021
Articles should not exceed
350 words

FROM THE PRESIDENT

THOUGHTS FROM SALLY FREEDMAN



As I sit here looking out at the snow outside – fortunately for me a very light fall here - I wonder where last year went and already we are turning our thoughts towards Lent. More months of lockdown have made us very introverted and I am sure you all feel the same!

Then I go out into the garden and see the spikes of the daffodils - in some places they are about six inches tall – and I realise that we are already seeing spring and that soon we shall be celebrating Easter - that life-giving and inspirational time!! We just have to put our faith in the Lord!

Also in February, we shall be doing our bit for the Wave of Prayer – on 19 to 21 February – over a weekend again! It will be quite different from usual as we cannot meet together in church and light our candles as we think and pray for our partners, but I am sure that you are all thinking of ways in which we can continue the unbroken chain. Some are going to try Zoom, I gather, and in our branch we are each going to make a 5 minute chain in our own homes. Please do try and keep your branch connected.

At the start of the new year we need to think of all our colleagues around the world, and one of the best ways of doing this is to join in the Midday Prayer session each Monday to Saturday on FaceBook when we are joined by members from around the world. I have seen names from USA, Solomon Islands, Australia, Myanmar, Africa as well as people from Britain and Ireland. It brings home to me very clearly what a wonderful thing is Mothers' Union and how effective we are around the world, even us in our small corner of Wales.

Happy New Year and God bless you all,

Sally

OUR PRAYER PARTNERS FOR THE WAVE OF PRAYER Feb 19 to 21 2021

Free State, South Africa
Bondo, Kenya
Ogbia and Offa Nigeria
Argentina and Uruguay, South America

Mothers' UNION
Gofal Cristnogol i Deuluoedd

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

REVD JULIE WAGSTAFF

Hello, I did think when I ended my November letter that I would be beginning this one on a really positive note, confident that after Christmas we would have seen the worst of the pandemic and lockdown; and here we are in February still caught up in the thick of it!

BUT as more and more people receive the vaccine, surely we can begin to look forward to the virus being brought under control and a time when we can share a hug again?

In the midst of such negative circumstances – and the whole world seems to be in turmoil – we have to try hard to remember God's promises, remain true to Him, walk closely with Him and take courage, not only for our own survival, but that others may know the life of God.

Being a member of the MU provides many opportunities to encourage and support, through prayer, giving, seeking ways in which to help end poverty, violence and injustice and to rebuild Hope and Confidence.

When I begin to feel overwhelmed, I find comfort in these words of St. Teresa of Avila:

Let nothing disturb thee, nothing affright thee; all things are passing, God never changeth! Patient endurance attaineth to all things; who God possesseth in nothing is wanting; alone God sufficeth.

And also those of Julian of Norwich:

All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

I hope they may help you too.

Every blessing.

Julie

MIDDAY PRAYERS

Rebuilding Hope and Confidence - Hope and confidence in God's Word

Monday: Jesus the living Word

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. *John 1:1, 14*

Sovereign Lord, your hand has touched the dry bones of our faith.

Your Word has breathed new life where there was death.

Your spirit raised us up from where we lay.

Your love has brought us home and to your Cross.

And by your grace we stand forgiven, free. Hallelujah! ©John Birch

We thank you, God, for Jesus, the living Word. May your Word forever dwell among us, imparting hope and confidence in your enduring grace and truth. Amen

Tuesday: Inspiration of God's Word

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. *Psalms 119:105*

God, we praise and thank you for your saving Word reaching out to us through the sacred scriptures.

We thank you, too, for the brothers and sisters with whom we share your Word and discover together the abundance of your love.

We pray for the light of your Holy Spirit, so that your word may lead and direct us into the unity you will for the sake of the world.

Give us grace, O Lord, not only to hear your Word with our ears, but also to receive it into our hearts and to show it forth in our lives; for the glory of your great name. Amen *Source unknown*

Wednesday: Power of God's Word

The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. *Hebrews 4:12*

Your Word is the light we see, a guide for our footsteps to where you are found.

Your Word is the strength we find when darkness threatens to overwhelm.

Your Word is the power we need to become servants of a Heavenly King.

Your Word is the reason we live in the sure knowledge you are everything.

©John Birch

We thank God for the power of his Word, which is living and active in our lives; which fills us with his strength and light, and directs our steps through every circumstance of life. Amen

Thursday: Security in God's words

As for God, his way is perfect: the Lord's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. *Psalm 18:30*

How perfect is our God! At the beginning of the day we receive your Word with joy and praise.

Whatever our day holds, whether good times or hard, we are upheld by the Word of God, and his limitless provision.

What a refuge is our God! At the heart of the day we trust in your Word for security and strength.

Whatever our life holds, if certainties prove false, we are upheld by the Word of God and his infinite steadfastness.

How faithful is our God! At the end of the day we treasure your Word with gratitude and praise. Amen

Friday: God's Eternal Word

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

Isaiah 40:8; Psalm 119:89

From the very beginning was Your Word which spoke this world into being,

Your Word which thunders from the skies,

Your Word which flows like mountain streams,

Your Word which whispers in morning breeze,

Your Word revealed through kings and prophets,

Your Word revealed through Angels' praise,

Your Word revealed in humble service,

Your Word revealed through a tiny child,

Your Word alive from the beginning of all things and to eternity. ©John Birch

May we be forever sustained by the written Word, inspired by the spoken Word, and bear witness to the Living Word, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Saturday: Hope and confidence in God's Word

God's words are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. *Psalm 19:10*

Living Word, Author of Life, we praise you for your Word in all its forms. As we hear and read your Word, give us enquiring minds and open hearts; ready to respond to its challenge and to embrace its vision.

Loving Father, send your Holy Spirit to bring life to your Word. Touch our minds and souls with the wonders in your message. Thrill our hearts by fresh insight in new and familiar scriptures.

Lord, we praise you for your Word. May it forever unite us together as we share in the wonder of your enduring grace and truth. Amen

MIDDAY PRAYERS

WAVE OF PRAYER

WE PRAY FOR MOTHERS' UNION WORLDWIDE:

1 Mothers Union worldwide

2 – 4

Matlosane in South Africa; Mumias in Kenya; Eha-Amufu in Nigeria; Ballarat in Australia, Niagara in Canada and North Kerala in India.

5 – 7

Botswana; Marsabit in Kenya; Idah and Jebba in Nigeria; Salisbury in England and Andaman & Car Nicobar Islands in India

8 Mothers' Union worldwide

9 – 11

Lainya in South Sudan; Ankole in Uganda; Abuja and Lagos-West in Nigeria; Lichfield in England and Karnataka North in India

12 – 14

Matana in Burundi; South Ankole in Uganda; Morogoro in Tanzania; Ohaji / Egbema in Nigeria; New Westminster in Canada and Dornakal in India

15 Mothers' Union worldwide

16– 18

Bentiu in South Sudan; Bunyoro Kitara in Uganda; Okigwe-North & Omu-Aran in Nigeria; Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh in All Ireland and Krishna – Godavari in India

19– 21

Free State in South Africa; Bondo in Kenya; Ogbia and Offa in Nigeria; Swansea and Brecon in Wales; Argentina and Uruguay.

22 Mothers' Union worldwide

23– 25

Wau in South Sudan, Kigeme in Rwanda; Bauchi in Nigeria; St Davids in Wales and Mandalay in Myanmar.

26– 28

Mundri in South Sudan; Madi and West Nile in Uganda; Isikwuata in Nigeria; Chichester in England Seoul in South Korea

FINAL BLESSING

We go from here with hope and confidence in the Word of God to guide our ways and light our path. AMEN



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DailyHOPE

A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Mothers' UNION
Gofal Cristnogol i Deuluoedd

BRANCH NEWS

LLANSAMLET BRANCH

Fortunately, on December 15th we were able to hold our Annual Readings and Carols service. Although, it was so different from what we are used to, it was just as meaningful.

We had six readings with appropriate carols being played, we were delighted with our special guest Aled Jones singing one of our favourites.



A PRAYER FROM HAIDEE WILLIAMS GORSEINON BRANCH

We see sand blowing across a beach, we see leaves floating out of reach,
Messages travel through the air, we can't see them but we know they're there,
May all our prayers said here today for places near and far away,
Travel on our *Wave of Prayer*, letting others know we care,
That in this changing world of strife we pray for every single life.

Loving God, we thank you for all we share in common with MU members in our Link Dioceses across the world.

Our lives, our work and our vision are interwoven and inter-related and we pray that we will recognise more fully what that means.

Lord of all, join us together in love for you and each other. AMEN

Valerie Pitt, a member of Llwynderw Branch, passed away on 28th December. Her funeral was held on 19 January and the cortege passed her place of worship, Holy Cross Church, on the way to the crematorium. She will be remembered as a great supporter of Mothers' Union who was full of fun.

Elaine Griffiths



FEBRUARY REFLECTION

JENNY BARTON - ZONAL TRUSTEE, WALES

My Dear Friends,



I hope you are keeping safe and well as we not only continue the fight against Covid, but against the severe weather conditions which are affecting parts of the world. Here in the UK and Ireland this means ice and snow and low temperatures but in some parts of the world it means floods, fires, and extreme heat. There is of course one person who has control of all weather, and our lives, and that is God our heavenly Father. He loves us so much and is here to guide us in the right way, the way that leads to happiness and a better understanding of the way ahead.

February is a month when we think and hear a lot about love, it's the month which contains St Valentine's Day, when we especially remember those we love, sending cards and giving chocolates and flowers, very often red roses. But who was St Valentine? Well, we are told he was born in 226AD in Terri Italy and is said to have befriended his jailer's daughter, healing her from blindness and sending her a letter signed 'from your valentine' [maybe this is where the saying 'love is blind' comes from]. This was possibly how the act of sending letters and now cards to those we love came from. Despite holding high office in the church, Valentine seems to have been quite a rebel, but maybe a loveable rogue with a sense of humour.

For me 14th February holds mixed feelings as it was the day, when 13 years ago my husband died. He was a loving man but never considered he needed to celebrate Valentine's Day. Now it is a day when the family remember him with love and celebrate his life.

I am sure you have happy memories of someone you have loved but see no more. But our God and loving Father has hold of them, keeping them safe as he keeps us safe in his loving arms. We have a love in our lives which has been given as a gift from our heavenly Father, a love for the Mothers' Union and its work. It's what keeps us motivated even during these



uncertain times. It is what keeps us knitting and sewing for hospitals and collecting for food banks, it's what keeps us making phone or video calls to MU friends, who at present we cannot see, but love and care for. I want us to be encouraged, to stand firm and strong in the Saviour's love remembering that the most important thing we can do is pray, pray with love in our hearts, because God is love and without Him we can do nothing.

I would like to finish both with a prayer for St Valentine's Day and some words written as a reminder of the work of the MU which is sung to the tune of, 'We have a Gospel to Proclaim', a tune we are all familiar with. You can go on to sing the hymn if that uplifts you as it does me.

Love & Prayers
Jenny



**We have a purpose and an aim,
this Worldwide Mothers' Union here,
a life in Christ we must proclaim
and Christian marriage hold most dear.**

**Five objects shown in word and deed,
Christ's marriage teachings to uphold.
encouragement as parents lead
their children and the faith unfold.**

**A worldwide fellowship in God,
in union, worship, service, prayer,
so that a stable family life
Is given to every child we share.**

**Our help to those in deep distress
should be our everlasting theme,
So through the world our union press
to serve, to love, with Christ redeem.**

PRAYING WITH PURPOSE

A TEMPLATE WHICH CAN BE ADOPTED FOR SPECIFIC CONTEXTS

1. At the start of your prayer time, encourage each other with a reminder of God's willingness to hear and answer prayer.

** See [Praying with Purpose - bible verses and quotes to use.](#)*

* I call on you my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. *Psalm 16:6*

* Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of his willingness. *Martin Luther.*

2. Open your time in prayer - ** See [Praying with Purpose - Prayer suggestions](#)*

* Almighty God, we come to you trusting not in the strength of our prayers but in your power to answer

Share any answers to prayer so far, reiterate needs still to be met and any new prayer requests.

Loving Lord, thank you for being close to us now as we agree together on our requests and petitions.

Thank you that the Holy Spirit is here to help us put our needs into words, and to plead our case before you.

We commit this time to you, for the growth of your Kingdom and the glory of Christ. Amen

3. Praying for specific aspects of the initiative. There are various ways of structuring your prayer time. You may like to choose different ones each time you meet or use your own ideas.

** See [Praying with Purpose - Creative ideas for Prayer](#)*

* Write prayer requests on strips of paper and link up to make a prayer chain.

Write down any particular themes that emerge as you pray and pass them on to those involved in the project if they are not there with you.

4 Finish by using a Biblical acclamation or blessing to ask God to bless the work. You may like to expand this to reflect the specific work for which you've been praying - ** See [Praying with Purpose - Blessings](#)*

* May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:13*

PRAYING WITH PURPOSE

A PRAYER TEMPLATE FOR MEMBERS@HOME

Each group will need to ensure that the “MU at home members” are kept up to date with prayer requests, progress and answers to prayer. Ideally, they should also be able to share their own insights from God with the group and/or the project

A Begin by offering your praise and thanks for answered prayer so far. Remind yourself of the power of prayer and God’s willingness to answer by reflecting on appropriate **bible verses**. (See previous page)

Loving Lord, thank you for the privilege of being involved in the work of building the Kingdom of God on earth through my prayers for (mention the specific project/initiative etc.)

I praise you with thankful heart for your answers to prayers thus far, in particular (mention specific answers) Truly you are an awesome God!

Thank you for your presence with me as I bring my requests and petitions. Thank you for the help of the Holy Spirit in putting needs into words, and in pleading their case before you.

I commit my time to you, for the growth of your Kingdom and the glory of Christ. Amen

B Now move into praying for specific aspects of the initiative:

As well as bringing before God any prayer points you have been given you may like to choose an appropriate passage of scripture, reflect on it for a few minutes then use the thoughts God highlights to you to pray for the initiative.

If you enjoy craft activities you could also engage in them as another way to pray – especially if the project includes craft in some way e.g. knitting – pause after every row to pray; focus on those who will benefit from the knitted item and use your thoughts as a basis for prayer

Write down any particular themes that emerge as you prayer and pass them on to those involved in the project

C Finish by using a **Biblical blessing** to ask God to bless the work for which you have been praying. (See previous page)

Praying with a purpose - www.mothersunion.org

WELL BEING IN LOCKDOWN

CONTINUITY: Daily Activity Tracker

Currently, it can be hard, each day, to keep a sense of routine and purpose. We can end up sleeping in, slouching around in pj's or comfortable clothes, eating meals at odd times and not managing to get outside for exercise. Amid a global pandemic and in lockdown it is completely understandable that the simplest things can just feel overwhelming and / or pointless.

By starting a daily activity tracker, you can start to centre your day, its not about big goals or changing your life, it is about finding achievement in bringing back some routine / continuity and taking pride in the small things. Everyone's daily activity list will be different and is personal to you. You could make a chart noting when you achieve each task – it is a nice thing to do at the end of the day to have a sense of achievement before you go to bed.

This idea was suggested by a trained therapist and can have a positive impact on mental health during difficult situations such as or coping with grief. Remember to be kind to yourself and if you don't manage to do all the activities there is always tomorrow and it is about the bigger picture not just one day!

It's about being content with what you do each day! (KW)

Suggestions for activities

- Wake up by 8am
- Read a chapter of the bible / Psalm before breakfast
- Shower before breakfast
- Make a healthy breakfast
- 30-minute walk
- Pray at Midday (*Why not Join Midday Prayers Live on FaceBook?*)
- Drink 6 glasses of water throughout day
- Make healthy nutritious dinner
- Call a friend / family member
- Write in your diary
- Go to bed by 11