

March 19th 2020

Dear Friends,

As promised, I am keeping you updated with relevant information sent to me from Mary Sumner House (MSH), whose aim is to share ideas and resources which may be of support to our members and their communities, spiritually and practically as we move through the coming weeks together. At all times, we recommend that members continue to check the latest advice from the Government and the NHS, and to be wary of “fake news” on social media.

Meetings:

In the light of the advice from the Church of England and Government we recommend that all meetings are cancelled or postponed for the coming weeks. MSH have cancelled or postponed everything up until the end of April, and will be monitoring the situation on an ongoing basis.

Activities (hospital visiting, prison visiting, AFIA, etc):

Collective face-to-face activities should cease for the duration of the crisis. Where individuals are fit and well and not in a high risk group, taking part in volunteering activities to support as and where most needed, would be a very positive way to bring hope to others in the community.

Sustaining one another within MU and our wider communities:

It is wonderful to see how members are already supporting one another, for example through messages on Diocesan Facebook communities. We would like to ask that all share, and encourage members to share, on the overall MU facebook group, so that we can provide hope and confidence to one another as widely as possible. Great ideas are already being shared, such as nurturing more telephone prayer circles; “buddying” between members; using time at home to do more knitting; agreeing a shared time to all be praying or worshipping together (for example at midday, using Families Worldwide as a resource).

Resources and Support from the (virtual) Mary Sumner House (MSH):

Please watch *Songs of Praise* this coming Mothering Sunday at 1.15pm, as it offers a wonderful opportunity for all to watch a programme together which features the work of Mothers' Union (including the hospital in Worthing and an overview of worldwide work from Zonal Trustee and our former president, Catherine Hilton).

There will soon be a reflection and a short video message from the Worldwide President, Sheran Harper and preparations are being made to produce a regular range of resources to help nurture members and their friends and neighbours through this challenging time. These resources will be shared on the website and on social media. MSH will still try to reach out to as many members as possible directly, through the e-newsletters and branch contact emails available.

I do encourage members to engage with these MU channels where you are able:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MothersUnion>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MothersUnion>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MothersUnion/>

A thought shared with us from MSH:

Worries are really unarticulated prayers. So put words to your worries and send them heavenwards. Make yourself talk them out in the presence of love. Notice the promise Paul makes: “Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6)

I am praying for you all,
Christine x