



Caroline Scull, Diocesan President, writes

What a cold start to the year! Helping my daughter scrape her car windows every morning made helping at Romsey packing boxes for those living under canvas in the Middle East and hearing that churches in Basingstoke were opening halls on a rota for homeless all the more poignant. Equally heart-wrenching has been the rush of applications for contact from Dads and Mums who had so missed seeing their kids over Christmas.

I hope you all loved your Wave of Prayer services and we continue to want to make our knowledge of our links broader and deeper so if you ever hear anything do follow it up! We will be hearing more about what's going on in Nandyal (our linked diocese in South India) at the spring Council and Information Day at Whitchurch. Continuing the world wide theme we will also have a presentation about Community Development Coordinators and what they get up to all around the world in the name of the Mothers' Union and who our worldwide fundraising supports – they get their grants in March so very apt timing!

But now in February we look forward to National Marriage Week and onwards to Lent and Mothering Sunday – resources are now available on the central MU website if you are involved in any way in your parish – and very importantly looking for families and planning funding events for AFIA during the summer.

Have fun and share the love!

Caroline

Introducing our new social policy contact

My name is Rosemary Joyner (most people call me Roo) and I am the new social policy contact for the diocese. I have two children aged 7 and 5 and I joined St Peter's Yateley Mothers' Union with some other mums about 2 years ago. I think Mothers' Union is an amazing organisation and one of the areas that most interested me was their social policy work, in particular the Bye Buy Childhood campaign. To help me get started in my new role, I would love to make contact with MU members in the diocese who are engaged or interested in social policy work. Hope to hear from you!

Roo

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ACTION AND OUTREACH

GIFT initiative

The current Archway includes a feature on GIFT - Human trafficking initiative, here's an update.

Southampton and Test Valley Stop The Traffik group are doing what they can to stop modern day slavery. Could you assist them with a campaign which aims to raise awareness with the public of this unjust and abusive practice, and tell them how they can make a difference with a simple phone call? Help is needed to make hosting a 'GIFT Box' installation this coming May in both Winchester and Southampton a reality: have a look online to see what it looks like at:

<http://www.stophetraffik.org/campaign/giftbox>

It is set up in a public place, and people are invited to look inside after offering them an enticing job, but there they discover instead the reality of life for many who have responded to such job advertisements in real life. It is a really big undertaking for what is, at the moment, a small group of people. To run the gift box about 30-50 volunteers are needed during the period 12th-18th May to help with a variety of jobs (12-15th in Winchester, 15-18th in Southampton). The neighbouring Stop the Traffik group in Portsmouth are also hosting a GIFT box, at Gunwharf Quays on March 18-19th, so you may be interested in helping there too or instead.

If you would like to talk to the Stop the Traffik group to find out more about who they are, what they do, and what help they are looking for, please email sotonact.stophetraffk@gmail.com with a contact phone number and they will get in touch.

Helen Pain (Trustee)

More supplies for Syria

Romsey Abbey MU made a collection of winter clothes and bedding for the refugees. In three days we had a transit van of goods. It had to be moved from the Abbey to storage. We were waiting to load when a wedding rehearsal party of eleven arrived as the van drew up. There were only four of us to do this, but the wedding party saw our dilemma and turned to help get the bags in the van. They were so pleased to help while they waited for all of their party to arrive. So many people gave generously for this appeal as they felt this was something practical they could do to help the plight of these people.

Dorothy Stokes



Diocesan Chaplain's corner

In the villages where I serve we had our Plough Sunday celebration service and lunch in mid January. It's such a wonderful service where many of the local farmers come to have their ploughs and soil from their land blessed before the start of the sowing season and many of them feel blessed to be working the land and caring for God's creation. That probably resonates with many of us who might talk of forests, mountains and other natural landscapes as being spiritual locations where we can sense a divine presence, feel refreshed, experience healing and make a deeper connection with God and his created world. How many times have you heard, "I must get some fresh air to clear my head", or "a walk in the woods always helps me to get things into perspective", or "there's nothing more relaxing than a bit of gardening"?

Jesus engaged often with nature as he used birds, plants and even the weather as part of his teaching. He told his followers to look and learn lessons about the Father and his Kingdom from the natural world – whether sparrows, ravens, vultures, seeds, wild flowers, thorn bushes, fig trees or southerly winds.

Jesus also took himself away to the natural world to seek prayerful solitude. Few of us today are called to the wilderness, but retreating to quiet places to spend time alone with God has proved vital to Christians throughout the ages, and contributes to our well-being too. I pray that we may all experience that sense of spiritual well-being, of feeling closer to God, as we encounter his created world, be that in some far flung place of the world we've never visited before, or at home on a local walk around our beautiful countryside.

Jane and I wish you and your families every blessing for 2017. With love

Reverend Jane, and Reverend Linda

DIARY DATES

Cathedral Prayers:

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| 1 February | Winchester Cathedral
Led by Bournemouth |
| 1 March | Winchester Cathedral
Led by the AFIA team |



Events:

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| 12 February | Thanksgiving and Celebration for Marriage Service – St Marys, Old Alresford followed by tea and cake |
| 13-19 February | National Marriage Week |
| 16 March | Information Day Whitchurch |
| 27 March | Lady Day |

AFIA Family holiday

Please contact me if you have a family interested in this years' holiday so that I can send the forms to you.

Sue Brinkman

(01425 474982, sue.brinkman@gmail.com)

Celebration and Thanksgiving for Marriage

4pm on Sunday 12 February hosted by
Old Alresford Mothers'
St Mary's Church, Old Alresford

followed by tea and cake in Old Alresford Place.
The Service is being conducted by Reverend Jane
Leese, MU Chaplain. Park in the drive at Old
Alresford Place.

All welcome - we would love you to bring along
photos of your special day for all to enjoy.

For catering purposes please book by calling
01962 732997

Did you lose your badge at the last Info Day?

A 'world in the cross' membership badge, was found in the hall at Highcliffe, possibly lost at the Information Day. Contact Christine Clode.

Fancy eating out?

Brockenhurst's latest fundraising idea is to host Ploughman's lunches on Tuesdays and or Afternoon Teas on Fridays in the Church Hall for MU groups visiting the New Forest on Tuesdays. Both cost £7.50 per head, a short guided tour of St Saviours or St Nicholas Church (thought to be the oldest in the New Forest) can also be arranged. Pre-booking is essential via Lesley – lesley.munt@btinternet.com

Meet Ollie!



The Neo-Natal unit at Poole Hospital have begun a new trial, taken from Denmark, and so along with the baby clothes that we knit, the Workbox Group at Highcliffe are making Ollie the Octopus. He/she is crocheted and the curly tendrils that you see remind the baby of the umbilical chord and bring comfort whilst they are in the incubator. Although the department have received a huge amount they need a continuing supply as each baby takes the Octopus home. There are strict specifications to follow so please contact me for a pattern or any more details.

Christine muclode@sadie2.madasafish.com

Christian Care for Families through praying, enabling and campaigning