**Finance and Central Services**

At this time of year the report for Finance and Central Services seems rather ordinary. However, this year and leading into 2018, a new system of personal recording is being introduced by MSH which will shorten the number of questions I have asked you all on the finance sheets, making our record gathering easier.

We will still need our personal information for the Directory but most of our details will be held in the future by MSH. During the year you will have the opportunity to fill in a record sheet of your own personal information which will be recorded by one of our data recorders on behalf of the Diocese.

During the year we have also updated our Constitution, bringing the Diocese up to date with general practice.

Through this year it has been very evident by the records sent to me of the sterling work done by our Treasurers. From Dorothy Henderson, through to the Deanery and on to the Branches, records have been smoothly kept. Treasurers are like gold, it's a job not many chose to do and some have to be greatly persuaded but I would like to record my thanks to them all. Polish your halos.

Tribute for MSH will be going up next year and consequently so will the amount we pay to the Diocese. We have yet to discuss the actual amount but it is probably going to be around the £19 plus mark.

All Record and Finance Sheets will be out for our next meeting. Please remember our Paying-in Day is early in February so please begin your filling in of the Sheets early.

Anne Lloyd

**Marketing Unit Report October 2017**

**Web site** – Margaret Weaver is doing a great job managing our MU website. She is looking for more information to upload so if any branches have anything of interest please send to Margaret weaver.marg@btinternet.com

**Twitter** – is back up and running. It is mainly accessed by the diocese and around the country but it keeps other’s aware about what is going on.

**Face Book** – Lesley is growing Facebook and is looking for more content. If anyone is planning a sponsor event please contact Lesley so that it can be promoted and we can offer a place to donate through our Virgin Giving page. bolton66meadway@sky.com

**Journal** – The cut-off date for articles is Saturday 7th October, the next Journal will be distributed at the Christmas Box Coffee Morning at Church House on Friday 1st December.

**Newsletter** –Newsletter Editor, Daniel Doran has designed our September Newsletter and by the time we get to MU Council almost all members will have has access to a copy. This is a very useful way to keep everyone informed between Journals.

**Marketing meeting** – We will soon enter 2018 and the final year of this Triennium. We have an agreement with the Journal designer for 6 issues only, so we will need to decide what we plan to do with publications from 2019 onward. A meeting will be held in January 2018, if anyone is interested in coming along we will give a date nearer the time.

There have been no requests for talks or conversations about growing membership, Barbara is arranging for a member of MSH staff to come to Newcastle and lead an event around the growing membership theme.

Lynne Craggs

Marketing Co-ordinator

**Action and Outreach Autumn 2017**

**Current Projects.**

**AFIA (Away from it all holidays.)**

This summer we have provided even more holidays for families who have met with adversity in their lives. Berwick upon Tweed and Sandy Bay caravan parks are popular destinations for these holidays. Because of increases in rental costs we now provide mainly four-day breaks. We have also provided bed and breakfast breaks for mothers with fewer children. These are usually to Whitley Bay because it has very good transport links and easy access to a whole range of activities. We also provided a holiday apartment in Tynemouth for a couple with seven children under 18 because caravans only sleep eight people and the children were not allowed to occupy a caravan by themselves. Margaret Crawforth has worked very hard in this area, especially coping with last minute cancellations leading to an urgent need to find suitable replacements quickly. Up to the end of October 144 people will have enjoyed a caravan holiday, 60 adults 3 babies, 71 children and 10 under-5’s. By the end of the October half-term 19 more people will have had caravan holidays. The evaluation sheets suggest that the holidays were considered to be “excellent”.

**Away days**

We have sent groups to an ever increasing range of visitor attractions. These days are for those who would find it hard to cope with overnight stays. Groups from refuges and charities supporting those in difficulties have been to Whitehouse Farm, Walby Farm etc. This year we also took a group to Adventure Valley in County Durham. We provide coaches to take families, buggies, wheelchairs and all the equipment needed to transport children. It is good to see the pleasure and delight on their faces as they enjoy a stress-free day out. By the end of October, 65 adults, 65 children and 2 babies will have enjoyed away days.

It is encouraging to see how many branches have special fund-raising activities for AFIA and Away days so that these treats can continue. As an example, Ovingham branch raised £300 for AFIA through a recent coffee morning.

We welcome applications from branch leaders for suitable recipients in their area for holidays and away days. This year we have had applications from Barnardo’s, members of the clergy and health workers (for more information, see the Spring edition of the MU Journal this year page 11 about nominating a family for a holiday.)

Branches continue to make Fiddle Pinnies ( which we have now been requested to call **activity aprons)** and **activity muffs**  and take them to their local care homes. For those branches which have no local contacts we can take them to care homes. We are planning Christmas visits with some aprons and muffs to care homes in Wallsend.

**Hospital bags**

Since hospitals in our region have been reorganised, the need for hospital bags has changed. MU volunteers took 70 bags to Cramlington in August. They have been asked to take loose items for children which can be used when needed.

Small blankets and clothes for premature babies are being made and donated to the RVI and other hospitals. Other baby clothes have been donated to “Walking With” in Wallsend. The arrival of refugees from Syria was followed by the birth of several babies, some of whom were premature. New and nearly baby clothes are greatly appreciated here. A further ten families are expected before Christmas so the need will continue.

**The Fisherman’s Mission** in North Shields is still receiving hats and fingerless gloves for the fishermen. We have had letters of appreciation from them, especially for the thermal hats and gloves. These are especially appreciated by foreign fishermen who have restrictions placed on their travel within the UK so that they are not able to visit the shops and so are unable to buy the hats and scarves so essential for the north east winters. We were told that the fishermen return to their boats and show the hats and gloves to fellow crew members who then come racing to the mission for their hats.

**Shoeboxes.** The collection date will be Friday December 1st at Church House. This has been booked and there will be the usual refreshments. Boxes will be distributed to “Walking With”, WERS and the Peoples’ Kitchen. The People’s Kitchen also made a request for lightweight sleeping bags, medium sized boxer shorts and jogging bottoms for their clients. They remember Gladys McCoulough and all her had work with much love and affection. I wondered if this year we could buy a small number of the requested items as a tribute to Gladys.

**Walking with** will receive Christmas shoe box gifts and food / gift vouchers.

**Changing Lives.**  There has been quite a lot of change amongst the staff but the new representative is delighted with our offers of help in the lead up to Christmas. The functions of some of the buildings have changed. She has asked therefore if we can support Cumberland House. This is a project for females aged 18 years and older. All have diverse issues such as drug and/or alcohol offending, homelessness, sexual exploitation and/or domestic violence. They hope we may able to help with craft sessions and the provision of board games and jigsaws as well as toiletries and materials for arts and crafts. The refuges at Francis House and Roycroft would be grateful for gift vouchers and any help with refreshments for Christmas parties. It has been requested that we provide “High Street” vouchers to give a degree of flexibility for the women. We gave Iceland or Asda vouchers last year, but it was pointed out that not all of the refuges are close to these stores.

**Pamper days** will be offered to the clients in some of the refuges.

Instead of a pamper day, Ridley House would like the opportunity to take the group and their children on the “Santa Express” at Tanfield Railway.

Staff told me that the **GAP** craft afternoon making jewellery and Mother’s Day cards was one of the most successful and appreciated activity sessions they have had, so they would like to repeat it next year. A small group were taken to Minsteracres for a day by GAP and they have requested that next year we might be able to fund a bus for something like this. I will try to find out more.

**Supporting work in Primary schools on the project “Women in the Bible “**

Karenza Passmore wanted some knitted figures for children working on the project to handle. She hoped some knitter from MU might be able to help. Joan Howard, a diocesan member agreed to make some and has produced a large number of very beautiful figures to enrich the stories. This has allowed the project to expand far beyond the original idea. As Karenza noted, “MU will always rise to the challenge.” Thank you Joan.

**St Silas reading project.**

Although the plan was to start this in September, the new vicar will not take post until October, so it has had to be postponed until later in the year.

**World Wide Links**.

Ruth Wood and the Benwell branch are leading this. Ruth writes

“We have sent the latest copy of the Journal to our World Wide links, as well as other letters and emails and have our Face book page<https://www.facebook.com/groups/384927445206075/>

We have, with the help of some of our members who are originally from Nigeria, managed to get a telephone number for the Bishop in Zonkwa, Nigeria, but have not yet managed to make contact. In African countries, the Bishop’s wife is often the MU President.

“We have not had any responses to date, but we’ll keep on trying and see if we can discover any personal links through people in Newcastle, who are from, or know people in our link dioceses.

“We will continue to send emails and will send Christmas cards to our Worldwide Links.”

**New projects:**

**Fresh start backpacks for newly released prisoners at Acklington prison**

The response from MU members has been amazing. Many packs generously donated by members have been taken up to the prison and we are still being given packs and contents. When Margaret and I took some of these up to the prison the prison volunteers told us how useful these were and how much they were valued. Charities representing the armed forces provide packs for ex-servicemen only. Your generous gifts means that all the men will leave the prison similarly equipped. Thank you for this and all the support you give to all the projects.

I am happy to come to any of branches in the diocese to talk about the work of Action and Outreach.

Linda Benneworth

September 2017

**Faith and Policy Report**

There’s not much to add since the Meeting in March. I produced a detailed report for that meeting stating what was happening about ‘Faith and Policy Watch’, Faith and Policy activities nationally and internationally and an account of the discussions at our meeting at the cathedral in February. The next Faith and Policy Meeting for those who wish to attend will be on the 10th October 10.30-noon in the Thomlinson Room at the Cathedral and anyone is welcome to attend.

The organisation for the Retreat in 2018 is under way and my thanks to Barbara Bailes for this. The cost of the retreat would be £92 overnight and day visitors £20+.

Josephine J Kulke

Faith and Policy Co-ordinator

**Diocesan Members Coordinators Report**

Our numbers of diocesan members have gone up from last. year. We now have 56 members. We have gained 5 new members who previously belonged to the Cathedral branch.

All Deanery leaders/contacts will be given an updated list of Diocesan members in their Deanery. We hope as usual that they will be able to provide a programme for each branch in their Deanery to enable Diocesan members to attend a meeting if they wished. We hope that Diocesan members will be invited to Deanery events.

We plan to have 2 meetings next year (dates to be arranged).

On 19th May we had an extra meeting. All unit coordinators gave a short presentation of the work of their units. It was well supported and all appreciated the opportunity to get the big picture of the work of the Mothers’ union in the Diocese. Journals and Families worldwide were available on the day.

Our 3rd meeting is on 16th September. Margaret Weaver is to give a talk on dementia awareness. Barbara will update us on the work of the Mothers’ Union and we will have our normal faith lunch.

Diocesan members have a big part to play in the life of the Mothers’ Union even if infirm and unable to attend meetings.

Their prayers are a great support.

Lesley Bolton & Ann Mitchell