

MOTHERS' UNION – NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

Annual Meeting of Council held in St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park, on Friday 27 March 2026. Present: Margy Tasker-Brown (President); Anne Blight, Karoline Wellborne (Deanery Leaders); Linda Benneworth (Marketing), Julian Brown (Finance), Sylvia Hickey (Diocesan Members)(Trustees); Revd Anne Marr (Chaplain) Sandra Davison (Secretary) Lesley Wright (Minutes Secretary) and 50members Apologies for absence had been received from a further sixteen members.

Margy welcomed everyone and reported the resignation of Anne Cairns as Vice President and Safeguarding Officer, due to ill health; she recorded our thanks to Anne and our best wishes for her recovery. The Chaplain Revd Anne Marr, assisted by the Revd Diana Macnaughton, led the meeting in worship; Anne included prayers for the sick, eleven deceased members, and those who had lost loved ones since the last meeting of Council.

**MINUTES** of the Annual Meeting held on 4 April 2025 were taken as read and confirmed. There were no matters arising.

**ANNUAL REPORT** Previously circulated

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Julian Brown reported that additional to his circulated report £164 had been received in bank interest.

Both reports were accepted and there was no further business.

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(Diocesan President)

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(date)

An Ordinary meeting of Diocesan Council followed at 6.50 pm.

**MINUTES** of the Ordinary Meeting held on 10 October 2025 were taken as read and confirmed. There were no matters arising.

**PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

Margy named seventeen new members and welcomed those attending Council for the first time. She asked everyone to pray about and consider the situation regarding the high number of vacancies on the Trustee Board. In addition to Vice Presidents for both Archdeaconries, and leaders for two Deaneries, leaders were needed for Safeguarding, Faith, Fundraising, AFIA and prisons; changes were taking place to simplify leadership roles. Also, her second term of office would be completed at the end of 2027; it was vital that MU continued to be membership-led and she felt very privileged. Margy recorded thanks to those involved in production of the Directory, especially Joan Howard who had printed all copies. The work involved had not been helped by the very late completion of some branch returns.

**150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**

Margy thanked everyone who was working hard to make this a special year. Those who had attended the Service of Celebration in Manchester Cathedral had greatly enjoyed the occasion, and Margy thanked Derek Marr who had carried our banner. The provincial prayer capsule, containing a prayer written by Revd Sheila Auld from this Diocese, would arrive in Hexham Abbey at 3.00 pm on 10<sup>th</sup> May to be welcomed with a short service followed by refreshments; those planning to attend were asked to contact Sheila Walker for catering purposes. The capsule would be handed over to Durham Diocese at Chester le Street on 17<sup>th</sup> May; several branches had already arranged to see it and Margy invited other branches to contact her if they would like her to bring it to them.

Zonal Trustee Dr Deb Lee would be cycling to St Paul’s in time for the national Service of Celebration on 10<sup>th</sup> June.

Each Diocese had been allocated a time on Mary Sumner Day to light a candle, ours being 9.00 am. Newcastle Diocese had opted to provide a celebratory candle for each branch, bearing the new MU diocesan 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo based on the Cathedral’s Lantern Tower; these were distributed and Margy thanked Sheila Walker who had organised their production.

The Province was planning to produce a Celebration book of pictures drawn or painted by children aged 15 and under, entitled “Through the Eyes of a Child”. Margy asked for artwork, in any size and any medium, on any aspect of MU, to be brought to the next meeting of Council; the best three would represent Newcastle in the Province and the winner from each Diocese would be included in the booklet.

Revd Anne Marr spoke on the arrangements for the Day of Celebration in Newcastle Cathedral on 25<sup>th</sup> July. There would be a wide variety of things to see and do. A large number of people had already become involved and more would be welcomed. The event would begin at 10.00 am, with a Service at 12.00 noon followed by lunch for which it was necessary to register. Further information was available from Anne M and Jackie Moore who was organising singers and musicians.

**REPORTS**

The Reports having been circulated were taken as read.

A question from the floor raised the problem many branches were experiencing with regard to bank charges; this was inconsistent, even between branches of the same bank. Julian offered to hold monies on behalf of MU branches and any branch experiencing difficulties was asked to contact him.

**SPEAKER**

The Revd Ric Waite, Diocesan Director of Mission and Ministry, gave an uplifting address commending the work of MU and reminding us that in giving to those in need we received, in at least equal measure.

Margy thanked him, presenting him with a pair of MU socks and an Easter egg.

The raffle was drawn; it raised £52 for funds.

There was no further business.

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(Diocesan President)

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(date)