

CLOGHER DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION ANNUAL REPORT 2022

2022 marked a milestone for us with the launch of **Transformation – Now!**

Adopted by all our members. Through this year and beyond, members of the Mothers' Union worked to:

- Transform ourselves, personally and spiritually, to live out our faith.
- Transform the churches and communities we work with and of which we are a part, to reflect Christ's kingdom.
- Transform Mothers' Union to be relevant for 21st century life.

For with God nothing shall be impossible *Luke 1: 37*

For nearly 150 years Mothers' Union has worked with communities in the UK and around the world. We believe that faith and compassion have the power to transform lives. We work under three core pillars to help communities transform:

Stopping Violence – through Peace and Safety

Stopping Injustice – through Gender Justice

Stopping Hunger and increasing Self-Reliance

Our programme work and central support includes literacy and savings programmes, parenting and resilience training and crisis assistance, alongside the myriad of small acts undertaken by our loyal and committed members in their own communities every day. We are led by people's needs. We listen and respond practically and through faith to the requirements of individual communities, doing all we can to improve people's lives today and instigate lasting change for tomorrow. Additionally, and where appropriate, we partner with other organisations and governments to increase our impact.

Our evolving response to the effects of a global pandemic combined with the start of a new triennium presents an opportunity to look to the future with fresh vision and adapt and learn to thrive in these changing times.

In 2022, **750,670 lives** were directly impacted globally whilst we also supported over **2.7 million** indirectly through our grassroots initiatives such as working in prisons, building resilience against climate change, supporting families, and educating about health.

1. Worldwide and Relief Fund

Each year members donate money towards the work of MU throughout the 80 countries where members are active. Projects supported include literacy and numeracy education, business skills, health and wellbeing, parenting skills and action to end gender-based violence and child exploitation. Funds are also sent to disaster and crisis situations from the relief fund as the need arises.

Although there were few meetings held throughout the year, members still forwarded their contribution towards these worthy causes.

2. Action and Outreach

2022 saw a return to normality for many and branch meetings were planned again. Indeed, it continues to amaze us to see the generosity of so many who give up their time and money to produce quality items for use across the Diocese and further afield.

Approximately 240 teddies were handed over to A&E and the Ambulance Service. Following guidance some were packed without MU connections as we can no longer do this unless we have confirmation of the wool and stuffing used. As teddies are classed as toys, they must conform to British Safety Standards, and we must have evidence that the wool and stuffing are approved by British Standards also.

Blankets and fiddle muffs have been distributed to nursing homes and the local hospital elderly persons wards. We include a slip explaining how they are donations from Mothers' Union. Cardigans, hats, and blankets go to Maternity units and Incubator cozies go to Neo-Natal units. We have also received some angel pouches for still-born babies. Many were beautifully knit in fine wool and would have taken time to complete.

During our 16 Days Activism against Gender Violence and our walk in Colebrooke many offered vouchers and gifts for Women's Aid and Tearmann. Members generosity was unbelievable, and packs were made up to be distributed to vulnerable women and children in their time of need. The Agencies were overwhelmed by the generosity and awareness of Domestic violence has been raised.

3. Building Members' Faith

We enjoyed a wonderful year of celebrations at All Ireland level and in our own Dioceses. Clogher Dioceses hosted three Area Services in May, St Laebhan's Parish Church, Killeevan, Christ Church Maguiresbridge and Kiltyclogher Church.

The theme of these services was **'Transformation Now'** inspiring us to shake things up and transform ourselves and our communities.

A wonderful afternoon was held at the Bishop's Indoor Members Jubilee Tea Party held at St. John's Parish Hall Fivemiletown (the venue moved due to inclement weather). Lovely company, fellowship and delicious tea was enjoyed by all present.

More than 50 Clogher Mothers' Union members and friends attended the Annual Gathering held on the 23 and 24 September in Belfast. The highlight was the two services of Celebration held in St Anne's Cathedral.

A special service was held in St Macartin's Cathedral Enniskillen on the 6 November to mark the visit of the Mothers' Union President, Mrs Sheran Harper and All Ireland President Mrs June Butler. The Very Revd Canon Kenneth Hall welcomed everyone to the commissioning of Mrs Heather Ellis as President of Clogher Diocesan Mothers' Union and Mrs Debbie Davidson as All Ireland Trustee.

Clogher Diocese Mothers' Union marked the 16 Days of Activism Campaign by holding a 'Walk Together Against Domestic Violence'. Over 130 people from across the community joined together in the grounds of Colebrooke Estate. The event was attended by the PSNI, Garda Siochana, Fermanagh and Omagh Women's Aid, Tearmann Domestic Abuse Service and The Aisling Centre. This campaign will continue to highlight Domestic Violence.

Prayer Chain

The prayer chain continues to be a great comfort to those who have needed prayer. Any Branch who does not have a Prayer Chain Representative please contact Valerie McMorris, Faith & Policy Coordinator to discuss the role.

A Prayer Diary is produced for every member, listing daily prayers under weekly topics. Each week, dioceses around the world are also remembered in prayer. The diary also features details of projects and activities in various countries, giving suitable prayer points. All of the details help members keep informed of the work Worldwide.

A twice yearly magazine 'Connected' provides uplifting and encouraging reading for members.

The use of social media has greatly helped the communication between members, between leadership and members, and helped to extend the messaging beyond the membership. Facebook, MU website and WhatsApp groups were all used.

4. Campaigning

16 Days of Activism 2022 Report

Across Ireland the 2022 *16 Days 365 Global Day of Action* saw the return to 'in person' activities. All dioceses liaised and supported domestic abuse services in their area.

RTE 16 Days service: The RTE 16 Days service broadcast on Sunday 4th December was very well received by the general public. Bishop Pat Storey, Canon Robert Deane and members led the service whilst Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, spoke and shared experiences from around the world and urged members to continue with the 16 Days 365 campaign.

In relation to 16 Days 365 feedback one concern was raised –

How do we interact with our local domestic abuse service?

The 16 Days 365 committee recommend personal engagement, engagement of the whole parish, and suggest MU Chaplain be involved.

With the PSNI answering a call in relation to Domestic Abuse every 16 minutes, it is a sore reminder that domestic abuse is very prevalent in every community. Wherever there is domestic abuse there are men, women and children – survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, domestic services personnel and volunteers together with our emergency services personnel – each deserving of prayer, God's love, our love and our compassion.

'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.' Galatians 6:9

5. Meetings

- Meetings in person and by zoom for fellowship, training and business became the norm this year and many members continued to use the new technology to suit their members needs and availed of the opportunity to communicate with others throughout the Diocese and All Ireland for Branch and Trustee meetings.
- However for some members, the technology was not available or manageable. The leadership in branches and in the Trustee Board, kept in touch using the telephone, newsletters and when possible, doorstep visits.

- A remote 'Annual Gathering' was held, where reports from around the world were recorded and broadcast, including a message from Guyana, from the Worldwide President.

Diocesan & Branch Activities

This year again some members saw restrictions on branch meetings while some members had lost confidence and were still fearful of meeting together.

Later in the year some branches held meetings in their church buildings and their parish halls, where the attendance was smaller than usual as some people were still not confident to meet.

Some examples of meetings include:

January

Clogher Diocesan Trustee meeting in Cathedral Hall with Heather Ellis (President Elect)

February

All Ireland Commissioning service in Armagh Cathedral with Archbishop McDowell

March

World Day of Prayer in many churches

All Ireland Trustee by Zoom

April

All Ireland Council, by Zoom

Clogher Diocesan Trustee Meeting

May

All Ireland Trustees

Mums In May Committee meeting

Area Service in Killeevan Parish Church

Area Service in Kiltyclogher Parish Church (Garrison Group)

Clogher Diocesan Spring Council, preceded by a meal.

June

Indoor Members Tea Party, Fivemiletown

Dedication of new banner at Derrybrusk MU, speaker - Bishop

August

Evening of fellowship in Dromore Parish Hall with Bishop Masamango of Sudan

September

Mothers' Union Gathering – St Anne's Belfast

October

Autumn Council – Killadeas Parish Church
Women’s Weekend in Springfield Hotel, Leixlip
All Ireland Council Meeting, Leixlip

November

Commissioning Service for Diocesan President in St Macartin’s Cathedral with World-wide President and All Ireland present.

6. Diocesan MU information

The number of active branches in the diocese is 34 plus one in abeyance. The membership figures for 2022 are 638 which also includes 3 diocesan members. 45 new members joined the organisation, sadly 22 passed away and 23 lapsed their membership. 17 members have children under 16 and there are 60 Indoor members.

The theme for 2023: ‘Transformation – Now’

The prayer of the Trustee Board is that the year ahead in 2022 will see improvement in the freedom to meet and the building of confidence in the membership. These plans are dependent on the state of the pandemic.

It is hoped that many stages of transformation will occur in the lives of the membership and within the charity, as they move out of the pandemic and address the many issues resulting from its legacy.