



C of I well represented as Mothers' Union returns home for 140th anniversary celebrations

More than 3,000 members of the Mothers' Union from around the world gathered yesterday to celebrate the mission agency's 140th anniversary. The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the patron of the MU, presided at a

service of celebration and thanksgiving in Winchester Cathedral – the burial place of the MU founder Mary Sumner.

The MU has grown from its 1876 roots as a small parish-based support group for the women of Old Alresford – the parish where Mary Sumner’s husband, the Revd George Sumner, was Rector – to a global organisation today of more than four million members in at least 80 countries.

Queen Elizabeth II, one of the MU’s patrons, has expressed her best wishes for the “continuing success of a charity that has given hope and strength to so many.”

Mary Sumner created the group in her parish after becoming aware of how difficult many women found the burden of motherhood. It was intended to offer mutual support and bring together women to support each other across the social classes.

Nine years later, Mary Sumner spoke at the Portsmouth Church Congress about the importance of national morality and the need for mothers to work together to bring positive change to the nation. The speech resulted in a number of other parishes adopting Mothers’ Union

meetings. The Bishop of Winchester created a diocesan organisation to act as an umbrella; and the model was soon adopted by the dioceses of Ely, Exeter, Hereford, Lichfield and Newcastle.

Today, the MU continues to promote the role of mothers as a catalyst for positive change in communities across the world.

Even in the early days, the MU had a radical approach to solving society's ills. Mary Sumner supported Hope Cottage, a refuge for women trafficked into prostitution. It was established out of a desire to support rather than vilify women who were forced into prostitution.

“This led to Mothers’ Union adopting a strategy of ensuring that the organisation was able to advocate for what helps overcome such situations – namely strong, happy marriages,” the MU said. “To think of being an example to ‘working class women’ seems outdated to our 21st century culture – but in its day reaching outside class for unity and empowerment of all women was progressive and done to help girls avoid dangerous situations.”

Today, the MU continues to campaign for women’s rights and in particular, for gender

equality – in relationships, in communities and cultures – and how this is reflected in national law and attitude. It is also campaigning against abuse and violence against women and girls.

The Mothers' Union "Mary Sumner Choir" travelled from Zambia to sing at yesterday's service; where they were joined by representative members from all over the world including the US, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Uganda.

Today (Friday), a newly commissioned play by the Saltmine Theatre Company will have its premiere at the MU's General Meeting in Basingstoke.

"Family life is under increasing pressure and the call on our resources is higher than ever," MU chief executive Beverley Jullien said as she outlined plans to invite members and staff to make practical pledges to enable the MU to double the number of beneficiaries it reaches. "Together we are on a journey of change, which will ensure that we remain as relevant and valued in the future as we were 140 years ago."

Currently, the MU and its worldwide team of volunteers transform the lives of more than half a

million people every year. They hope the new pledge campaign will enable it reach one million people every year by 2021.

The MU is organised in every Church of Ireland diocese, all of whom are represented at this annual general meeting and services.

New Irish Presbyterian resource on being a 'Close to Home' congregation

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has launched (21 September) *How to be a 'Close to Home' congregation*, a new study resource aimed at helping congregations build integrated, intergenerational communities of God's people who can effectively pass on their faith to all children in the church and those currently outside it.

The seven session DVD and accompanying booklet, which was launched at a special evening event last night in Assembly Buildings, seeks to help anyone in a local congregation to better understand the heart of covenant theology. The resource also examines various practical implications for local churches, including how



faith is passed on to children within Christian families.

Graeme Thompson the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) Youth Development Officer, who has developed the resource, said, "The aim of this new package of resources is to encourage a movement towards doing things intentionally based on our covenant theology. The heart of covenant theology is how it defines our relationship with God, a relationship based on His promises, which are a reflection of His declaration to us that "I will be your God and you will be My people", which God says repeatedly throughout the Bible.

"Our own research indicates that young people from PCI congregations are more likely to retain a strong faith in Jesus and stay connected to the church, if they grow up in homes where faith is very intentionally passed on. These are the

characteristics of a covenant people, where children and young people are at the heart of a family of God, a place that sees its identity as a people under His faithful promises.

“It is the outworking and embracing of God’s covenant promise that will keep our children and young people feeling right at home in a congregation that seeks to be a joined up community of all ages,” Graeme Thompson said.

The new study resource has its roots in conferences held in 2013 and 2015 that introduced the concept of ‘Close to Home’ and unpacked the essence of God’s Covenant with His people, His promises and assurances contained within it. The conference also looked at the practical implications that this would have for the Church’s day-to-day life and witness.

Dr. Bryan Chapell, senior pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church, Illinois in the United States and former Chancellor of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, made a virtual appearance by video at last year’s conference to inform discussion during the workshops. At Wednesday’s launch he appeared in person.

Dr. Chapel said, “I am delighted to be back in Belfast to be a part of the launch of this exciting new resource. It is exciting because I believe that it will equip local churches to fulfill their identity as the Covenant Family of God, especially supporting Christian families in passing on their faith to the next generation.

“The Bible does not leave parents alone, or without guidance for the rearing of their children. The rich resources of covenant community, family and faith are meant to combine for the strength and assurance of families blessed by God generation upon generation.”

Dr. Chapel also took part in a panel discussion to discuss how being a covenant family could be worked out in practice. He was joined by Rev. Alastair McNeely of Richill Presbyterian Church, Nicki Jemphrey, Knock Presbyterian’s family ministry co-ordinator and father of two, Jamie McGuire.

The How to be a ‘Close to Home’ congregation study resource is available from www.presbyterianireland.org/closetohome.

Iona library gets £100,000 grant to rescue priceless books

The Iona Cathedral Trust has received £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to rescue a little known library hidden away above the cloisters of Iona Abbey. The project will create a new Heritage Collection for the island.

The early monastery of St. Columba, founded in the sixth century, famously produced the Book of Kells, amongst other notable manuscripts at a time when libraries were a symbol of wealth and education uniquely owned by an elite few.

The current library, restored during the rebuilding of the Iona Abbey claustral buildings by George Macleod and the Iona Community, includes collections of national significance.

The collection includes Gaelic manuscripts and examples of Celtic art among the treasures that will be restored. A digital catalogue of the Heritage Collection will also be made available online thanks to the expertise being shared by the University of the Highlands and Islands.



The grant will enable the Cathedral Trust to preserve the library for future generations.

The project plans to uplift several hundred library items to conservators on the mainland for restoration and repair over the next two years. It is supported by a number of organisations including Historic Environment Scotland, the Iona Community, the University of the Highlands and Islands, as well as the Island of Iona Community Council. Iona Abbey is one of Scotland's top heritage attractions, and the island of Iona regularly attracts more than 130,000 visitors each year.

There will be plenty of opportunity for volunteer help and public involvement through creative, educational and conservation workshops in local schools and communities. Information events in the Argyll and Bute area are planned to keep local communities updated with progress. A public exhibition will be created on Iona in the final year to showcase all the hard work, fun and play generated by the project before its expected completion in October 2018.

Commenting on the award, the Chairman of the Iona Cathedral Trust, Very Rev Dr Finlay Macdonald said:

“We are delighted this gem of a library can be made more accessible and our valuable heritage preserved thanks to this support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Iona Cathedral attracts many visitors, but the library is hidden away over the cloisters. Many more people will be able to enjoy it thanks to this grant.”

Lucy Casot, Head of HLF Scotland, said:

“This is a great project that, thanks to the National Lottery players, will transform the Iona Abbey Library Project for future visitors and encourage everyone to enjoy its amazing

heritage collections. Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to give its support.”

Storytelling workshops inspire children’s leaders

Martyn Payne from Bible Reading Fellowship recently led an inspiring series of workshops for clergy and Sunday school leaders on storytelling and all–age worship.

Six events took place in Dublin, Jordanstown, Belfast and Omagh run by the Church of Ireland Board of Education in conjunction with the Children’s Ministry Network and the Sunday School Society for Ireland.

In the storytelling session, Martyn led an interactive seminar bringing the art of telling stories alive. Participants came away encouraged and enthusiastic for their work with children. In the all–age worship sessions, Martyn challenged participants to look at how children are included in the whole Church and what steps can we make church more inter–generational.

The Revd Peter Ferguson, Rector of Castlederg, commented: ‘This has been a brilliant encouragement and start to our work with

children this term.’ Dr Peter Hamill, from the Board of Education, added: ‘Martyn brought many years of experience working with children and yet a fresh approach to our work among children.’

New film tells story of Muslim aid to Ireland during the Famine

The little-known story of the Turkish Sultan, who was one of the few people to come to the aid of Ireland during the Great Famine, is the focus of a new film starring actor Colin Farrell.

Between 1845 and 1852, Ireland endured the terrible loss of a million dead and the mass exodus of more than one million people never to return.

When the Turkish Ottoman, Sultan Khaleefah Abdul-Majid I, heard about the unfolding disaster, he declared his intention to send £10,000 to help Irish farmers.

However, Queen Victoria intervened and requested that the Sultan send only £1,000, because she had only given £2,000 herself.



The insignia of Drogheda United Football Club depicts a Turkish star and crescent moon in recognition of the generosity of the Turkish Sultan who came to the aid of Ireland.

So the Sultan sent just £1,000 in cash – but also secretly sent five ships full of food.

The English courts attempted to block the ships, but the food arrived in Drogheda harbour and was left there by Turkish sailors. It probably saved thousands of lives. (That £10,000 would be worth over a million now)

The movie is built around this charitable act from a Muslim country to a Christian one, separated by 4,000 miles.

The generosity of the Sultan was all the more impressive, as his own empire was experiencing enormous internal difficulties at the time.

There is also a love story in the film between Fatih, a Turkish sailor, and Mary, an Irish girl, played by Irish actress Saoirse Ronan. Irish actor Dave Bresnahan plays the role of Fr Frank, a Catholic priest.

Shot on location in Ireland and Turkey, 'Famine' is written and directed by Omer Sarikaya, together with Tipperary-born screenwriter Norina Mackey.

Sarikaya spent two years researching the story. He has said that most of the profits from the movie will be donated to UNICEF.

Speaking about his role, Bresnahan said: "Many people today, including Irish-Americans, are not fully aware of the devastating loss of life that took place because of the Famine in Ireland. I am deeply honoured to be a part of this film project that will bring the reality of the Famine to the screen so that modern generations will know what their ancestors had to endure." Filming for 'Famine' took place in Ireland, England, and in Turkey in the summer of 2015.

This unique episode of Irish history is mentioned by James Joyce.

In 'Ulysses' he writes: "Even the Grand Turk sent us his piastres. But the Sassenach tried to starve the nation at home while the land was full of crops that the British hyenas bought and sold in Rio de Janeiro."

In 1995, a plaque was unveiled in Drogheda by Mayor Alderman Godfrey and the then Turkish Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, Taner Baytok.

It reads: "The Great Irish Famine of 1847 – In remembrance and recognition of the generosity of the People of Turkey towards the People of Ireland."

The story is also remembered in the insignia of Drogheda United Football Club – which depicts a Turkish star and crescent moon.

News briefs

+++ National Maternity Hospital Annual Remembrance Service - The National Maternity Hospital will hold its Annual Remembrance Service on Sunday October 2 2016 at 3pm in the churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Church of St Andrew, Westland Row, Dublin 2.
The Service is held in memory of babies who have died in the hospital through miscarriage, stillbirth or shortly after birth. Bereaved parents, their families, and friends are welcome to attend. Light refreshments will be served and there will be an opportunity to meet hospital staff members and other parents. No booking is necessary, just come along on the day. Street parking is available in the vicinity of the church. If you would like any further information contact the Chaplaincy Department in the National Maternity Hospital at 01 6373121 or email chaplain@nmh.ie

+++ Retreat for Youth Leaders - Engage
Connor Youth is hosting a Retreat for Youth Leaders at Drumalis Conference Centre, Larne, on Saturday November 12. The event, which runs from 10am – 2pm, will be helpful to anyone involved in leading young people across the diocese, including volunteer leaders and leaders of uniformed organisations. Worship will be led by Jude Frame, and Judith Cairns, Chief Executive of Love for Life, will contribute to the day. Cost is £5 and this includes lunch and a resource pack. Places are limited, and anyone wanting to attend is asked to email Diocesan

Youth Officer Christina Baillie at
Christina@connor.anglican.org.

+++ Corrymeela rhythm of prayer retreat - The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, will lead a one day retreat to focus on the Rhythm of Prayer at the Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, on Thursday October 20. 'Slowing Down to Meet Yourself' will be hosted by the Corrymeela Community and is a day of guided reflection on the rhythm of prayer which will provide an exploration of stillness and silence. The retreat lasts from 10am - 4pm. Cost is £30 per person [including lunch]. To reserve a place, contact: Corrymeela Belfast Office +028 9050 8080 or email belfast@corrymeela.org

+++ MLA's tribute to City Missioner - William Humphries MLA posted on Facebook yesterday - "Tonight I finished off a busy day by spending a lovely evening with the good people at Glencairn City Mission. This was a special event in the congregation's life, as they paid tribute to their faithful and dedicated City Missionary, George Lunn. George was awarded the British Empire Medal by Her Majesty The Queen and was presented with his medal, at a recent ceremony in Hillsborough Castle...I have known George

Lunn for many years and I was delighted to provide a letter, supporting his application. George has given the people of Glencairn nearly 30 years outstanding service and has made a massive contribution to that part of our city. Our thanks go to George, his wife Cassie and their family circle. Well done thou good and faithful servant!"

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Farming Poll 2016: Church faces 'huge wake-up call' from survey

Irish Examiner

The **Irish** Examiner ICMSA Farming Poll has brought to light the latest views and opinions on religion and the priesthood among the farming ...

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/farming-poll-2016-church-faces-huge-wake-up-call-from-survey-755700.html>

Religious orders asked to offer empty priests' homes and convents to homeless

Belfast Telegraph

Religious orders have been urged to offer the state vacant or disused ... only 7 to 8% of the

houses in **Ireland** as social housing is not good enough.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/religious-orders-asked-to-offer-empty-priests-homes-and-convents-to-homeless-35067607.html>

Disused churches are being donated to house homeless people -

ChristianToday

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/disused.churches.are.being.donated.to.house.homeless.people/96032.htm>

Mail/Christian Today

Reports that Pope Francis met with war refugees and religious figures including the Archbishop of Canterbury on Tuesday in Assisi, for a day of prayers for peace, openness toward refugees and calls for religions to marginalize fundamentalism (see above). Archbishop Justin decried how despite much wealth, people in Europe experience "dissatisfaction and despair, in the breakdown of families, in hunger and inequality, in turning to extremists."

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3798682/Pope-slams-deafening-silence-indifference-war-victims.html?>

[ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490](#)

Guard

Further coverage of the fine of £34m levied by Financial Conduct Authority on day-day lender CFO Lending. The article notes that the Archbishop of Canterbury “declared war” on pay day lenders in 2013 and the regulators that have taken up the fight by punishing bad lending behaviour.

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/sep/20/archbishops-criticism-payday-loans-causes-reform-industry>

Tel/Christian Today/Premier/Guard

Reports that the C of E is reaching out to young women and black and ethnic minority Christians and asking them to consider becoming ordained priests (see above). More women are also needed to enter seminaries if the Church is to achieve its target of a 50 per cent increase in candidates for ordination by 2020. A report conducted by Church’s Ordained Vocations Working Group shows that if ordinations increase as hoped there would be 7,610 stipendiary priests by 2035 but only 6,300 if the current ordination rate is maintained, a 15 per cent drop.

The Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson, who chairs the Working Group, said, "It's encouraging to see most of the dioceses really rising to this challenge, as they reshape their vocations teams and put new and more proactive vocations strategies in place."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/20/race-to-save-a-much-loved-british-endangered-species-the-local-v/>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-pledges-to-increase-numbers-of-vicar-training-places-by-half>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/20/church-england-appoints-national-minority-ethnic-officer-black-clergy>

BBC

Reports that a 17 year old and a 13 year old who dragged a vicar out of her car in a "shocking attack" as she left a church service have been sentenced. Revd Irene Wilson was leaving Holy Trinity Church in Hull in August when her vehicle was targeted. Revd Wilson said it had "affected myself and the work that I do".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-37421385>

Exp

Further coverage of the visit of Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, to All Saints Academy in Cheltenham to find out what young people think of their body image. Her visit followed a recent Children's Society report which said many teenage girls worry about their appearance because of pressure on social media. A spokesman for the Bishop said, "Of the seven girls present not one was happy with their physical appearance, while five of the six boys were more confident about how they looked."

[http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/712457/
Britain-female-bishop-Rachel-Treweek-shocked-
teenage-girls-unhappy-body-image-issues](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/712457/Britain-female-bishop-Rachel-Treweek-shocked-teenage-girls-unhappy-body-image-issues)

Durham Advertiser

Reports that the funeral for the former Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins will take place at Durham Cathedral on Wednesday, September 28. David Kennedy, Vice Dean and Precentor of Durham Cathedral is quoted.

[http://www.durhamadvertiser.co.uk/news/
14754163.Funeral details for former Bishop of
Durham Dr David Jenkins announced/?
ref=rss](http://www.durhamadvertiser.co.uk/news/14754163.Funeral%20details%20for%20former%20Bishop%20of%20Durham%20Dr%20David%20Jenkins%20announced/?ref=rss)

Christian Today/Premier

Further reports that armed police will patrol Canterbury Cathedral as security is tightened following attacks in Europe. Officers will stand guard outside the place of worship after an increase in the number of international terror attacks and a rise in national threat levels, although Kent Police stress there was no direct threat to the Cathedral or other sites.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Armed-police-to-protect-Canterbury-Cathedral>

Guard

Reports that Royal Bank of Scotland's attempts to spin off 315 branches have received another setback after one of the highest-profile bidders pulled out. Santander has withdrawn from talks again in a blow to the latest efforts by the bailed-out bank to dispose of the branches. The article notes that as the result of a complex deal agreed by RBS in 2013, the abandonment of the flotation means that the bailed-out bank is paying millions of pounds to a private equity consortium which includes the Church Commissioners.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/sep/20/rbs-suffers-fresh-setback-in-williams-glyn-spin-off-deal>

Mail

Picture story of the £1.7 million restoration of Durham Cathedral and the work of the stonemasons working on 12 tonnes of new stone.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3798537/Durham-Cathedral-s-1-7million-restoration-continues.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

BBC, Exeter Express and Echo
Following a [Bishop's visitation](#) at Exeter Cathedral, conducted by an independent panel, the Bishop of Exeter, Robert Atwell has ordered a 'change in culture' at the Cathedral, which is led by Dean Jonathan Draper. Bishop Robert and Dean Jonathan issued a joint statement to accompany the Bishop's Visitation Charge which was published yesterday:

"The directions in the Charge lay down a clear path for the Cathedral to follow over the coming months and they have been welcomed by the Dean and Chapter. We are committed to continuing to work together to ensure the Cathedral remains at the heart of the spiritual and cultural life of the city and the wider county."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-37429587>

<http://www.exeterexpressandecho.co.uk/dean-criticised-in-bishop-s-report-on-management-of-exeter-cathedral/story-29738154-detail/story.html>

Metro/Mail

Further coverage of the convictions of two boys, aged 13 and 17, of attacks on Revd Irene Wilson who said of her attackers: “Although many people have expressed their negative thoughts about the culprits, I have at all times tried to understand what brought them to do this to someone who was only trying to help others wherever possible. I’ve asked that those who pray for me also pray for the two young men, that they will make a positive decision and move away from a life of crime.’

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/09/21/boy-13-attacked-vicar-with-thug-he-met-in-court-waiting-room-6141955/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3799978/Pair-aged-17-13-jailed-two-years-carjacking-disabled-vicar-met-one-week-attack-court-waiting-room.html>

Comment

Nature: Religion and science can have a true dialogue writes Kathryn Pritchard, who works for the Archbishops’ Council.

<http://www.nature.com/news/religion-and-science-can-have-a-true-dialogue-1.20627>

C of E Communications: I can find myself in these statistics

<http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/150675594232/i-can-find-myself-in-these-statistics>

Diocese of Manchester: Inclusive church

<http://www.manchester.anglican.org/news/1976/inclusive-church>

Psephizo: How soon will God act?

<http://www.psephizo.com/biblical-studies/how-soon-will-god-act/>

Blogs

Think Theology: #Things Jesus Never Said

<http://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/things-thingsjesusneversaid-never-said>

7Minutes: Questions we're afraid to ask about the Bible

<http://7minutes.net/blog/questions-afraid-ask-bible/>

September 23

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