

Winchester (2026)

(A candle is lit)

In our own Winchester Diocese we pray for and give thanks for our Mothers' Union diocesan chaplain, Rev. Terry Roberts, and for our Diocesan Committee, the Diocesan President, Sue Murphy, and Ann Barker, Jo Criscenti, Linden Hansen, Linda Hoskins, Anne Pycock, Caroline Scull and Sue Tickell. We thank you that Sue Murphy has represented us so well as President, for all the work she has carried out in that role especially in relation to the forming of the new Mothers' Union South West Cluster, and that she has been able to continue in her roles of Diocesan Secretary and Diocesan Treasurer. We particularly thank you that we now have a new administrator, Jo Ayres-Proctor, in place, to help Sue and the committee.

Our theme for this triennial is 'Join us and join in'. We give thanks for all our members and pray that each one will spread the word about Mothers' Union, telling people what made them decide to join us and join in and hopefully inspiring them to do the same.

Thankyou Lord for all the ideas, enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by our members involved with Diocesan projects. We give thanks for the Child Contact Centre at Popley near Basingstoke. This operates under the umbrella of the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC). The centre is staffed by volunteers, who are mostly but not exclusively MU members. Each potential volunteer is given some training, DBS checked and approved by the NACCC. Caroline Scull advises that volunteers meet families suffering under extreme adversity with this opportunity of rebuilding bonds between children and their visiting parent in a place that is safe, professional and loving enough to reassure their resident parent. She says that the joy shown by the visiting parent and then the children during the fortnightly visit takes only a few sessions to become both real and wonderful and is why the volunteers love the project so much. Caroline also sees first hand that the relaxing of the resident parent's anxiety and the building of reassurance takes much longer. We pray dear Lord that the resident parents will come to look forward to taking their children to the centre, being reassured that the time they spend with their visiting parent will help both to develop good and loving relationships and to give the children a stronger foundation for their future.

Another of our Diocesan Projects is the Away from it all fund (AFIA). This year our funds supported the summer programme of the Bournemouth Local Vocals group, the Ringwood Meet and Eat group, families from the Winchester Women's Refuge with a trip to Marwell Zoo and families at Basingstoke Women's Refuge who had a coach trip to the seaside. Sue Murphy is currently having discussions with the Director of Education for our

diocese on how we might use our AFIA funds to support school children in deprived areas. If any members have any ideas for treats or privately know of a needy family who would benefit from a treat they should contact Sue Murphy, Jane Chick or Sue Tickell in confidence. Their contact details are on the back of Archway magazine.

This year our members have again been very involved at branch level in supporting diocesan, deanery and branch projects including Literacy and Development, the Angel Tree project, the Summer of Hope and Christmas appeals, Mothering Sunday, dementia cafes and period poverty to name but a few. Members were also involved with the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign, making the public aware that ashamedly 1 in 3 women are affected by this.

We thank you Lord the success of our projects and for all the good things that the committee members, branch members and helpers achieved in the last year. We pray in this triennial that people will continue to be enthused to Join Us and Join In. We give thanks for our founder, Mary Sumner, and the forming of the 'Union of Mothers' in 1876. We look forward with anticipation and excitement to all the celebrations taking place this year to celebrate our 150th anniversary.

Amen

Gill MU / Winchester 2026