

THE MOTHERS' UNION – NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

Minutes of Council Meeting held in the church of St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park, on Friday 7 October 2016 at 7.30 pm. There were ninety members present and apologies had been received from a further twenty.

Diocesan President Barbara Packer welcomed everyone to the meeting. Diocesan Chaplain Revd Jane Scott presided over a short Meditation and prayer. The names of those who had died since the last meeting of Council were read: Evelyn Amos, Ella Bly, Audrey Ferguson, Gladys Steele and Mabel Renney.

Barbara Packer presented to the Chaplain Barbara Bailes to be commissioned as Prayer and Spirituality Officer for the Diocese.

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March previously circulated were taken as read, adopted on the proposal of Jennie Jones seconded by Angela McKeith, and signed by the President. There were no matters arising.

President's remarks (attached)

Reports from Leaders' Conference and Worldwide Council, AGM and service at Winchester, Retreat at Shepherd's Dene (previously circulated) Barbara thanked those who had compiled the reports and especially congratulated Margaret Riches whose efficient arrangements for the party attending the Council had meant that though she had taken ill and had been unable to travel everything had gone smoothly; it was good that Margaret was recovering and able to be present at this meeting.

Unit and Deanery Reports had been previously circulated and Barbara thanked everyone who had compiled these. Some of the co-ordinators highlighted particular aspects of their report:

Anne Lloyd said that Joint Membership would be £32, i.e. one person paying the diocesan tribute of £19 and the other the MSH tribute of £13, plus whatever levy a deanery or branch applied.

Dorothy Henderson had recommended to the Trustees that since the current balance was well in excess of normal annual requirement £5,000 be donated to the Overseas Fund and this had been agreed.

Jennie Jones (attached) had arranged a speakers' day on 4 November at Church House from 10.00 until 13.00 ending with lunch; she wanted to update the existing speakers' list which had not been revised for a considerable time. Barbara reminded the meeting that the date for the speakers' day had been given in the recent Newsletter.

Linda Benneworth displayed an activity apron prepared by adding various activities to a ready-made garment; she stressed the need for secure sewing of the items and from the floor Christina Malvern pointed out that very cheap ready-made garments might easily be ripped by users. It was planned to purchase Iceland vouchers to give in the run-up to Christmas, which were appreciated by the recipients as there was no stigma attached. The circulated list of contents for Shoe Boxes had omitted the need to specify whether the box was suitable for male or female recipient, and it should be remembered that the breakdown was in the region of 70% men. Some discussion took place on whether soap should be included; some present already included soap boxes. Boxes should be as full as possible and contain a plastic carrier bag for easy carrying.

Josephine Kulke asked Branch leaders to inform Sheila Smith whether they wished to receive packages for their indoor members at the Cathedral on Thursday 1 or at Church House on Friday 2 December.

Dates two dates were added to the calendar that had been sent out before the meeting:

- Central Deanery Advent Carol Service at All Saints, Gosforth, on 28 November at 2.30 pm
- Autumn Diocesan Council 6 October. Some discussion took place on the start time for this meeting and it was agreed that it should begin at 7.00, refreshments from 6.30. It was not possible to change the usual day from Fridays because of the availability of the venue.

Other Business:

Jane Moody (Newsham) had brought a hand-made quilt which was being raffled and had so far raised over £200; the raffle would be drawn on 2 December and, as she was about to go into hospital, Jane needed someone to take responsibility to ensure that the quilt was at Church House to be handed to the winner.

Anne Brunton (Hexham) brought an “A-Z of Church-y Words”, a useful guide for new Christians, costing £4, which could be posted out for an additional £1.50.

Chris Malvern (Delaval) had attended an excellent Baptism Preparation day organised by the Diocese and commended this to others.

Barbara mentioned a number of resources that were available at the meeting for inspection or purchase, including MU baptism leaflets and cards.

Presentation on World-Wide Linked Dioceses

Barbara, wearing a Mothers’ Union uniform dress made for her on a visit to Nigeria, gave a talk on our five Wave of Prayer Links:

- Bo, Sierra Leone
- Zonkwa Missionary Diocese, Nigeria
- Central Buganda, Uganda
- Mpumalanga, South Africa
- Barrackpore, West Bengal

She included some photographs taken from her own visits to neighbouring dioceses and some from the linked dioceses themselves. She highlighted some of the things that each was concentrating on, especially empowerment of women and teaching to children and to adults of both sexes; some of the particular problems experienced in each of the five areas were poverty, the consequences of HIV/AIDS and recent Ebola outbreaks, and the sheer distances involved. Barbara invited everyone to include in their prayers some aspect of the presentation that they might have particularly appreciated.

The Wave of Prayer this year would be from 30 November to 2 December; the Chaplain would write the service which would be emailed to all Branch Leaders in good time..

There was no further business and the meeting ended with a prayer by the Chaplain and the Grace at 9.20 pm.

AFTER MEETING NOTE

Long Service Awards and Commissioning Certificates are now written by Jennifer Snowdon, to whom details should be sent.