

The power of prayer

Members and friends gathered in Southwell Minster on the feast of Ss. Simon & Jude, October 28th, for our Annual Festival service.



After the branch and deanery banners had been processed around the nave, the Dean, the Very Rev. Nicola Sullivan, welcomed everyone, especially our special guests, Lynne Tembey, Worldwide President and Barbara Taylor, York Provincial President.

The augmented Churches Together Choir, conducted by Gwen Bragg and accompanied by Stephen Bullimore on the organ, sang John Rutter's Introit, *'Look at the world'* and then everyone joined in the singing of *'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty'* as the Diocesan Banner was processed through the nave.

The Dean, assisted by Canon Jacqui Jones, our two Chaplains and Pat Brewin, presided at the Eucharist. Barbara Taylor read the lesson from the Book of Jeremiah and Pat Brewin read the Gospel from Luke chapter 5.

Seven members of the Tozer School of Dance then danced their interpretation of Elton John's *'The Bridge'*



Lynne Tembey gave the address and she began by reminding us to thank God for all His blessings and for all that has been achieved in the past, but we must continue to ask for His blessing. She asked us to reflect on the place we call home:

- ✿ Is it a place where we receive love and respect?
- ✿ Is it a place where we offer love and respect?
- ✿ Is it a place where we welcome those who knock on our door?

For Lynne, home is a safe haven, a place of sanctity but this is not so for everyone. She reminded us of the suffering caused by floods in India and Sierra Leone, the displaced in Sudan, refugees seeking sanctuary in Europe. She also reminded us that for some, home can be a place of hurt and pain, a place of violence, and she explained

how MU challenges these issues so that men, women and children might live in peace, security and love.

The MU mission is to support families wherever they are in the world. MU members are the hands of Christ, providing security both physically and spiritually and Lynne encouraged us to be Christ-like to those on the fringe of society. She said that since 1876 seeds have been sown and come to fruition and she referred to the Gospel reading where Jesus told Simon and Andrew to cast out their nets to catch the fish. She wondered whether, when Mary Sumner first cast out her net in 1876, she realised just how far her message would spread around the world. But, Lynne reminded us, Simon and Andrew needed others to help them and so do we. We need to be challenged. Are we willing to try something different?



Lynne then reminded us of our MU vision to show God's love through loving relationships. She said that the Bible gives us many instances of how to pray and we know the Lord hears our prayers and, so we are able to do many things. As she has travelled around the world on behalf of MU, Lynne has been aware of God's steadfast love and also the power of members' prayers for her. She thanked us for our prayers and for our financial generosity which enabled so many lives to be so much better in so many ways. She ended by encouraging us to look forward with renewed faith and hope and with love in our hearts. *'He will not let you down; please do NOT let Him down!'*



It was an inspiring address with so many personal anecdotes.

Thank you, Lynne.

The service then continued with the Tozer Vocal Group singing *'In Noctem'* by Nicholas Harper.

The intercessions were led by our two Chaplains, during which we remembered members who had died during the past year and the Book of Remembrance was laid on the altar.



After we had received communion, Pat Brewin thanked Jacqui Jones for her help in preparing the service and presentations were also made to Lynne and Barbara, and Julia Holloway who is stepping down as Editor of LinkUp. The choir then sang the Gaelic Blessing and we all joined in the final hymn 'For all the saints' as the banners were processed around the Minster once again.



After lunch, our Annual General Meeting was held in Trebeck Hall. Pat Brewin welcomed everyone and showed us examples of the red, orange and green hats needed for the maternity units in local hospitals and said patterns were available. The Annual Reviews were available, and Jenny Hempstead explained that although unrestricted funds were just about okay at the moment, she felt that the situation could be fragile by 2019 and asked branches to consider donating their extra funds to diocesan funds. Pat told us that Clare Hardy was stepping down as Secretary on October 31st. As Julia Holloway and Sophia Popham were also stepping down as LinkUp editors at the end of the year, an advertisement has been circulated for someone willing to be Secretary and also edit LinkUp and the number of hours has been increased from 7 to 10 hours per week. She appealed for branches to contribute towards the additional cost.

Lynne Tembey then told us about her life as Worldwide President but she began by pointing out that the members are the ones who have the initiatives and she just passes on what we have achieved. She asked us to think:

What can I offer?

What can I do?

and she reminded us that God will always give us strength. She then went on to tell us about her visits to fellow members around the world.

When she went to Kenya her suitcase was left at Heathrow and it was 5 days before she got it back. It contained all her talks she had carefully prepared, but God gave her the strength and the words to carry on until her case arrived. She visited a village where the priest told her how grateful he was for the Church and Community Mobilisation Scheme (CCM) which had enabled his parish to pay their Parish Quota as well as build a hall and furnish it.

In Barbados she saw so much suffering and poverty, but MU is reaching out with love, often providing breakfasts for children before school each day. She told a lovely story of the local children singing *'He's got the whole world in His hands'*

Lynne was one of the first 'outsiders' to visit Myanmar (formerly Burma) where over 1700 members turned up for the Provincial Meeting. It had taken one lady 4 days to get there and it would probably take her 6 days to get home because she was so tired - but it was worth it because of her love for MU.

Lynne felt it was wonderful privilege to visit Zambia and Zimbabwe where, despite all the persecution and struggles, members had such love.

Lynne was the first Worldwide President to visit Congo and the bishops were amazed that she had come! She visited a prison for men and women where the cells were just divided by curtains. The women had their children with them because it was safer than leaving them behind. Even so, when she asked the women if it was a place of safety, she was told no, and the prison officers ignored what happened. MU members visit the prison to read Bible stories.

Lynne visited a hospital when she went to Sri Lanka. She met a mother who was being comforted by MU members because she felt guilty because her daughter had been badly scalded.

She then talked about encounters she had had in UK, particularly on train journeys and she encouraged us to always wear our badges and be prepared to talk about MU. She ended by reading a passage from a biography of Mary Sumner where members are encouraged to have faith, patience, devotion and obedience to the call.

'Keep your hands in His and He will lead you to so many opportunities'

Yet again, it was a privilege to hear about MU worldwide at first hand. Thank you, Lynne.

Barbara Taylor then reminded us that we DO make a difference and she told us about the wedding fairs in Manchester Diocese where the diocese and MU share a stand. She felt we must get the MU message to ALL our members and inspire them to spread that message.

It had been an inspiring day - a day when the Autumn sun shone the whole time and I am sure everyone returned home with renewed enthusiasm. *Text Sheila Allton: photos Pauline Wainwright*

