

December
 A child is born

As we journey through Advent, we praise God for his Word which leads us to the stable of salvation. As we draw near to adore the Christ-child, we share in the joy that the risen Lord accompanies us every step of the way. Amen.



The Gift of Mothers' Union

By choosing from the new MU Gifts of Support cards you are making a donation which could help our projects and programmes support women, families, and communities to bring about lasting change. With 7 to choose from, they make a perfect gift for Christmas. See www.mueshop.org for details.





This Advent, in the joy of looking back to when the Messiah was born, let us not forget to look forward to when the King will return. We live in the time of now and not yet, between the first and second coming of Christ. The story is only half told; the other half awaits. The plan of salvation is complete, yet its outworking is still to unfold. Unlike Christ's first coming, which was witnessed by a select few, his second coming will be seen by all. May we always be ready and waiting to meet our glorious Lord.



PRAY
 16



Loving Lord, as the star lit up the sky and showed the Wise Men the way to Jesus, may the true light of the world, Jesus Christ our Saviour, light up our hearts, and let his love give us renewed hope, happiness, and strength, for the year ahead. Amen.



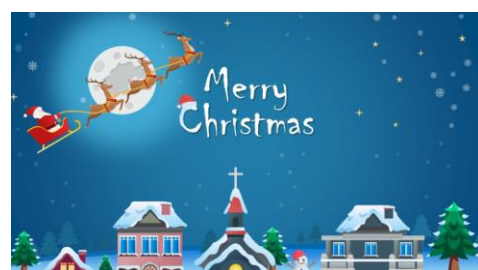
Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and every blessing and good wish for 2025.
 Lesley xx

WATCH AT HOME
ONLINE SERVICE



Tuesday 3rd, 10th and 17th at 8pm

Dates for your Diary 2025
 Annabella Hayes Day Friday February 7th
 Spring Council Saturday April 5th
 Festival/Diocesan Holy Communion Service May 1st



As Mothers' Union continues to encourage branches and churches to RISE UP against domestic abuse this month we feature Christmas: It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

Well, until it isn't!

Over the Christmas period, reports of domestic abuse always go up, and this year we have had the added element of the World Cup - another point in the calendar when incidents of domestic abuse increase. It is important to remember that it is not the events themselves that cause this rise, but the opportunity for power and control to be exerted by the abuser. In 2021 a survey by the UK's largest family law firm Stowe Family Law found that one in six respondents believed they were more likely to suffer emotional or physical abuse from their partner over the Christmas period.

As Churches how can we respond to this?

Be proactive: Ensure that the signage around any buildings or events is obvious, directing people to agencies or individuals that can support and help during this time. Ensure our messages are sensitive and bring the joy of Christmas.

Be alert: While this time is super busy, try your best to be aware of the relationships around you. Do you notice any differences? Who isn't present who usually would be? Do you know the reasons why?

Be educated: A perpetrator's past behaviour is the best indicator of future behaviour. Just because an individual has been able to leave their abuser, it does not mean that the abuse has ended. Post-separation abuse can continue years after they no longer live together, and the first six months of leaving are when there is the highest risk to the victim.

Be aware: Ensure that the victim's safety is at the forefront of your mind, and make any decisions on the basis of this. Know your own feelings and reactions; this is often the place we make decisions from, which can mean that our own biases get in the way of the safety of the individual and their family.

Be respectful: Do not presume someone wants you to help; be generous, but be kind and sensitive as well. We might think inviting someone round who will be alone is the obvious thing to do, but check with them as being with others may not be what is helpful to them.

Be generous: With the above in mind, if you know of individuals who have left an abuser, offer some financial or practical assistance to them. With the utility prices so high, top up their gas and electric so they can be warm, and cook or provide a hamper or gifts for family members.

Help is at hand from specialist domestic abuse services:

- If there is ever an emergency call 999.
- Gardaí - www.garda.ie/en/crime/domestic-abuse/
- Republic of Ireland 24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900
- Women's Aid website offers help and support: www.womensaid.ie
- Men's Aid, Ireland Confidential Support Line: 01-5543811 www.mensaid.ie



Mothers' Union Prayer Diary 2025

We, as Mothers' Union members, are united through the power of prayer. Prayer is our foundation, our strength, and our inspiration.

Each day at midday, Mothers' Union members all over the world pause to pray.

By praying together, we strengthen our bond and remind ourselves that we are always connected in prayer, wherever we are in the world.

The global 'wave of prayer' expresses our commitment to each other, in all the places we work and reside.

By joining with and sustaining this wave of prayer, we can be part of something bigger than ourselves.

Together our prayers are transforming lives around the corner and around the world.

