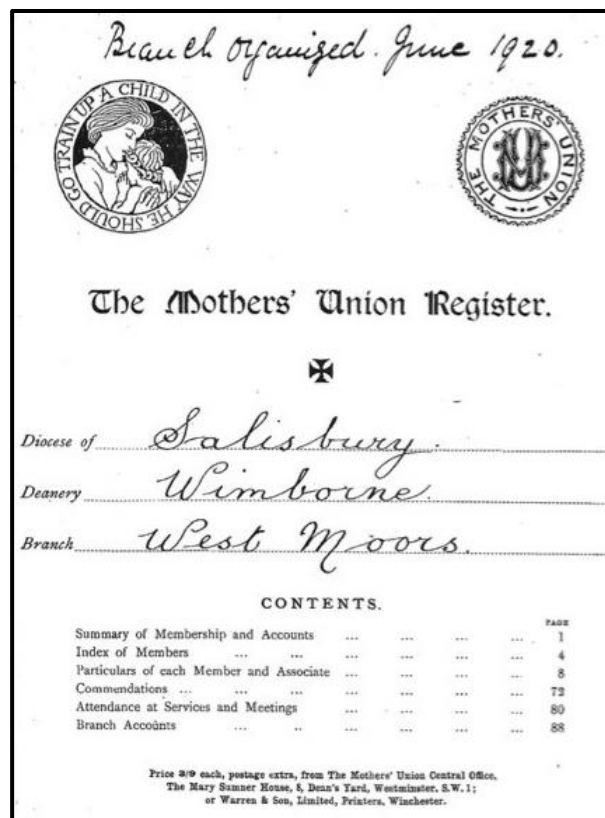


Matthew 28:16-20

When Liz Bowler, our Mothers' Union leader wrote an article for the parish magazine on today's centenary she quoted these words from the Mothers' Union diary:

*Working as ambassadors for Christ our goal is to see all people enjoy loving, respectful and flourishing relationships.*

I really love that statement because it says something so powerful about what lies at the heart of the Mothers' Union and also loving relationships to me are what lie at the heart of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Which is very apt for today because of course it's Trinity Sunday. Now I am going to be completely honest and say, one of the things that really presses my button is when I hear people say – no one wants to preach on Trinity Sunday. Red rag to a bull, why wouldn't you want to preach about God, which is what the Trinity is. It shouldn't be about trying to explain the Trinity even by illustrations like the Trinity is like an egg, shell, yolk and white but one egg. But I confess I do use one in school assemblies the Trinity is like Cadburys, Galaxy, and Sainsburys own, but they are all the same chocolate. I only use that one because I pig the chocolate afterwards. It might taste nice, but it is trying to explain the Trinity by using our own human constructs and we can't, the Trinity is a Holy mystery and something we can't fully understand this side of the grave. What we can know though and experience is the relationship of love that lies at the heart of God. Last week Revd Ruth in her farewell sermon introduced it by saying...may I speak in the name of God, Source, Servant and Sister. That was written by a mutual friend of ours Revd Sue Hart. It really caught me last week because I think that says something far more profound about the Holy Trinity than me trying to explain God by using chocolate.



Source, Servant and Sister. God was the source of life at the beginning of time and brings life into every part of creation and human existence, and so can we, if we want to. Last week we celebrated Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit and as people of faith, the Spirit calls into action to be sources of life to others, which is something that I think the Mother's Union does so beautifully. There are numerous Mothers' Union projects that bring life, but there are two local ones that really resonate with me. The first I encountered myself; before I went up north for ordination training, I was a volunteer lay chaplain at Erlestoke prison near Devizes, which is a Cat C men's prison. The Angel Tree project at Erlestoke was run by the Mothers' Union in partnership with the Prison Fellowship and they sent presents to the children of prisoners at Christmas. In their first year doing this I got to see first-hand what

that meant to the prisoners to know that their children had received a present, you can't put a price on that and for some it was the first step in the journey of building again loving and flourishing relationships with their kids. And the other project I think of many, that brings such life is the Holiday Home at Rockley Park. To provide a place of safety and rest for families who quite frankly are at the end of the tethers is just wonderful and it starts life again.

Those acts of kindness have the capacity to change lives, but of course they come with a cost, don't they? One of the things we are celebrating today is 100 years of service and dedication by West Moors Mothers' Union, not just through the big global projects they have been involved with, but the day-by-day, week-by-week, commitment of time and love by the generations who have met at West Moors and of course our present 21 members. So this is our chance to say thank you to you, because being a member of Mothers' Union is not the walk in the park some on the outside might think it is, it is being an ambassador for Christ, as it says in your diaries, and it means being a servant for Christ, which is costly. One of the foundations of our faith is Christ's giving of himself for us on the cross, and like Christ on the cross, if we are to be a source of life for others, it means sacrifice for us as well, in time, talents and treasures and the opening up our lives and our hearts to those who are in need. Which is why the Mothers' Union has stood in sisterhood with those who are suffering gender-based violence and domestic abuse. Jesus tells us to love our neighbour as ourselves and that means having the courage and faith to stand alongside and be a sister, not just when the sun shines but when the rainclouds gather.

Mary Sumner's original vision over 140 years ago was to transform the lives of families and for children to grow up in homes that were filled with the light and love of Jesus. To me that vision is just as relevant today which is why the Mothers' Union has such a role to play here at St Mary's and across the world, by being a source of life, a servant for Christ and a sister to those in need.

St Augustine said become what you receive. In a moment we will share communion, albeit in these days spiritually, but together by faith we will receive God as source, servant and sister, so may we go out into our world refreshed spiritually, and inspired by the example of the Mothers' Union to become source, servant and sister.

Amen

### **Home Group questions**

- *How can you be a source of life?*
- *Why does the world need servants for Christ to change lives?*
- *When are you a sister?*