Summer of Hope
Sow seeds of strength, faith and resilience

Across the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), conflict continues to uproot families and devastate communities. This summer, be part of a movement that nurtures resilience and brings hope to

Julienne's Story

Julienne has spent much of her life in fear – of violence, of abuse, of instability.

Displaced by conflict in the DRC, and trapped in an abusive marriage, she fled with almost nothing. For over a decade, she tried to survive, without education or a safe way to earn a living.

Then she joined a Mothers' Union literacy circle.

With this support, Julienne learned to read and write for the first time. She began to understand her rights – and how often she had been denied them.

"It felt like moving from darkness into light" – Julienne

How you can help

Make a donation – your gift can help provide life-changing support through Mothers' Union groups, rooted in faith and community.

Grow hope this summer – plant sunflower seeds in your garden, windowsill, or church space as a visible sign of your support and prayers.

Start a Sow & Grow fundraiser – host a garden tea party, a Grow-a-thon sunflower competition, or a bake sale and raise funds together.

Try something new – Take a look at our **Fundraising Inspiration** for more ideas

"Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy." – Psalm 126:5

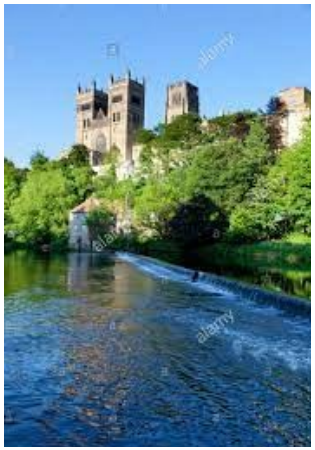
Your gift today can bring lasting change in some of the world's hardest places — and help faith bloom in the most unexpected soil.

GIVE NOW and help sow strength, dignity and hope.

Mothers' UNION
Stopping Violence
Stopping Poverty
Stopping Injustice
www.mothersunion.org

Join us
and
Join in!

Durham Diocese Newsround Summer/Autumn 25



Trustee Letter.

Dear Members and Friends.

Well, hello again. It is really good to be writing to you all again via the Trustees letter.

It is Summer time and as I write it is a fine, dry, blowy day quite typical of our local weather which doesn't care about holiday jaunts. I have recently returned from holiday; I went to Italy and was fortunate to get to Vatican city, St Peter's Basilica and the Sistine chapel. The visits into Basilica and chapel couldn't have been more contrasting; the first one was welcoming and pleasant , the second quite different. The experience has caused me to think about hospitality at home, church and Mothers' Union meetings.

Are our homes welcoming or so tidy visitors feel uncomfortable or is there something deposited on every seat? In church do we look at new comers inquisitively when they arrive, perhaps we look away in case we embarrass them, are there 'welcomers' ? If we ask a name do we remember it for next time? In Mothers' Union do we sit in the same place beside the same person, do we get up to greet a brave new person – do we explain any unique practices?

Jesus often accepted hospitality or the generosity of followers, he even lay in the tomb of a stranger. Many incidents in both old and new Testaments involve sharing of food and shelter Jesus, himself, fed thousands, washed feet, shared meals and cared for the sick.

At a time when we are all concerned about church attendance and Mothers' Union membership, may be it is time to look at ourselves analytically. We all perceive our churches and branches as "welcoming" but are we really? I'm sure we have all had the experience of going into a new place and feeling lost or discomforted, it can happen anywhere. How many times do we go into a new tea room only to be faced with a completely alien system: sit down / wait to be seated/ look for a menu/ read the board/ order at the counter /wait for table service/ pay now/ pay at the end. It is so confusing and this is how it is in our churches and branches to visitors and that's all before the words we use. How can we emulate Jesus and ensure full churches and over flowing branches?

I had a wonderful holiday too much pasta, pizza and gelato, hope you are able to have a break away and if you bring any money back DON'T FORGET AFIA.

Happy Summer, Jean

Members who have celebrated special birthdays

Joan Osborne	80yrs	All Saints, Lanchester
Jean Chicken	90yrs	St. Paul's, Spennymoor
June Wilson	80yrs	St. Paul's, Spennymoor
Norma Downs	80yrs	St. Paul's, Spennymoor
Eileen Turnbull	80yrs	Holy Trinity Southwick
Sylvia Metcalf	85yrs	St Cuthbert's, Darlington
Hylda Hopper	85yrs	St Cuthbert's, Darlington
Margaret Kidd	85yrs	St Cuthbert's, Darlington
Victoria Calloway	50yrs	Christ Church Consett
Sandra Ainslie	70yrs	Christ Church Consett
Deena Foster	65yrs	Christ Church Consett
Kathleen Gilson	90yrs	St. Mary's Sherburn Village,
Janet Wright	70yrs	St. Mary's ,Sherburn Village
Alison Blackburn	70yrs	St Aidan's & St Cuthbert's
Marsha Belfield	85yrs	St Aidan's & St Cuthbert's

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Congratulations to all who have celebrated special wedding anniversaries

Sandra & Alan Spence	60yrs	St. Philip & St. James, Tow Law
Susan & Ellis Leatherbarrow	40yrs	St Cuthbert's, Darlington
Dawn & Stephen Gibson	40yrs	St Cuthbert's, Darlington

Members receiving long service awards

Eleanor Ross	26yrs	All Saints Newton Hall
Glenis Clark	51 yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Dawn Craggs	25yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Trish McManus	25yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Elsie Dow	25yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Joy Sudron	25yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Pam Newbold	25yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Margaret Taylor	25yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Eileen Youngson	25yrs	St. Michael and All Angels Norton
Norma Colwell	55yrs	Christ Church Consett
Ella Green.	55yrs	Christ Church Consett
Margaret Ransome	30yrs	Christ Church Consett
Sandy Jackson	20yrs	Lanchester
Audrey Newton	20yrs	Lanchester

To all new members

Anita Wilson	St Cuthberts Darlington
Debbie Duncan	All Saints Newton Hall
Julie Day	All Saints Newton Hall
Anne Black.	All Saints Newton Hall
Elizabeth Rayn	Holy Trinity Southwick
Olwen Hodgson	Holy Trinity Southwick
Pauline Meek	St Thomas, Harelaw.
Audrey Clasper	St Mary's , Sherburn Village
Eileen Clarkson	St Aidan's & St Cuthbert's
Sue Brissenden	St Aidan's & St Cuthbert's
Ann Greenhalgh	Norton St Michael and All Angels.
Patricia Wisson	St.Mary & St.Cuthbert CLS

Royal Garden Party 20th May 2025

Kathleen Wilson and Ann Clark attending the Royal Garden Party. Hosted by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

A wonderful afternoon meeting Royal family, and many people to talk too! Music , a delicious afternoon tea , enjoyed by everyone. Kathleen Wilson.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
GARDEN PARTY

Tuesday, 20th May 2025

Cucumber, Mint, Vegan Mayonnaise Sandwich
Coronation Chickpea, Grilled Red Pepper, Rocket, Wrap
Smoked Chalk Stream Trout, Lemon Cream Cheese Bagel
Chicken Tarragon, Asparagus, Spinach Wrap
Gammon Ham, Fresh Vine Tomatoes & Wholegrain Mustard Sandwich
Free Range Egg Mayonnaise, Crushed Peas and Broad Beans, Watercress Sandwich

Sunflower Tart
Earl Grey Éclair
Raspberry Shortbread
Bergamot Victoria Sponge
Sour Cherry Chocolate Delice
Blueberry Lavender Financier
Strawberries and Cream Battenberg
Buttermilk Scone with Blackcurrant Jam & Clotted Cream

Iced Coffee
Sandringham Apple Juice
Pear & Elderflower Presse

Sandy Jackson and Audrey Newton receiving their twenty year long service awards from Margaret Brown branch leader of Lanchester MU.

17th April ,Presentation of Maundy Money, Durham Cathedral

The Royal Maundy is an ancient ceremony which has its origin in the commandment Christ gave after washing the feet of his disciples on the day before Good Friday. The commandment, or mandatum, 'that ye love one another' (John XIII 34) is still recalled regularly by Christian churches throughout the world and the ceremony of monarchs washing the feet of the poor, accompanied by gifts of food and clothing, can be traced back to the fourth century.

It seems to have been the custom as early as the 13th century for members of the royal family to take part in Maundy ceremonies, to distribute money and gifts, and to recall Christ's simple act of humility by washing the feet of the poor. Henry IV began the practice of relating the number of recipients of gifts to the monarch's age, and as it became the custom of the monarch to perform the ceremony, the event became known as the Royal Maundy.

In the 18th century the act of washing the feet of the poor was discontinued and in the 19th century money allowances were distributed in place of the various gifts of food and clothing.

Today's recipients of Royal Maundy, as many elderly men and as many elderly women as there are years in the sovereign's age, are chosen because of the Christian service they have given to the Church and community. At the ceremony, which takes place annually on Maundy Thursday the monarch hands to each recipient two small leather string purses. One, a red purse, contains - in ordinary coinage - money in lieu of food and clothing; the other, a white purse, contains silver Maundy coins consisting of the same number of pence as the years of the monarch's age.

At first ordinary coinage was used for Maundy gifts, silver pennies alone being supplied in Tudor and Stuart times for the ceremony. Specially-struck Maundy Money started in 1662 in the reign of Charles II with an undated issue of fourpenny, threepenny, twopenny and one penny pieces. It was not until 1670 that a dated set of all four coins appeared.

Maundy Money has remained much the same since 1670, the coins used for the Maundy ceremony traditionally being struck in sterling silver. A Maundy set still consists of four small silver coins, but in 1971, at the time of decimalisation, the face values of the coins were changed from old to new pence.

Deadlines for Newsround 2025 are

Friday 3rd October

Please send entries to:
Joan Parr 01325 487981
joan.parr24@virginmedia.com
4, Walworth Crescent, Darlington DL3 0TX

Dates for your diary 2025

July 15th	Deanery leaders' lunch at URC 11 – 1
August 5th	Mary Sumner Day service at URC 2pm
October 21st	Diocesan Council at URC 10.30 – 12

We give thanks for the life and witness of those who have died

Joan Pigg	89yrs	Christ Church Consett
Carole Harrop	80yrs	St Mary's,Sherburn Village
Kathleen Mary Armour	74yrs	St Michael & All Angels Houghton

Wearmouth Deanery Lady Day Service in Sunderland Minster. Service of Holy Communion lead by Canon Provost Clare MacLaren, guitar music provided by MU Margaret Humble.
An afternoon of prayer, music and friendship.
Canon Clare a past member of MU accepted Kathleens' offer to rejoin.!

Michelle Dundas writes from St.Mary & St.Cuthbert CLS

This year as part of our mission to reach out to those in need in our local community we are making up a small household hamper for ladies who are leaving our local womens hostel to go into permanent accommodation. We asked our members if they would bring one item from our list of items .We started with a washing up bowl and put in a few cleaning items that we thought would come in handy, a nice mug ,some coffee, tea and of course some biscuits.. We place a little card in with it with a prayer showing God's love .

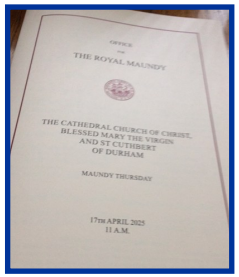
17th April ,Presentation of Maundy Money, Durham Cathedral (Con't)

The Royal Maundy Service. Visit of The King and Queen.

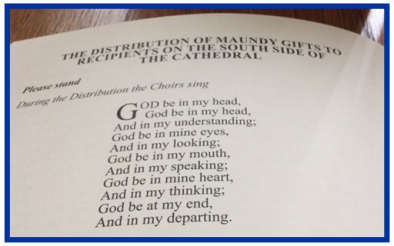
Presentation made by His Majesty The King to 76 men and 76 women, one for each year of his life. Given for outstanding Christian Service, Two purses presented. One Red ,One White, containing the Maundy money.
White one, newly minted coins. Red one, Red, a £5 coin commemorating the Queen Mother and a 50 pence coin featuring Second World War stories.
A wonderful service of music, singing and special prayers.

An honour for all present at such a momentous day.
Contact me if you want me to speak to you Branch/ Deanery of the day.

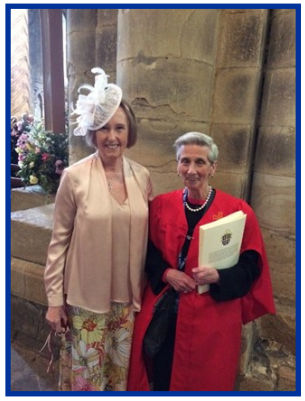
Thankyou Kathleen Wilson. Special Services Steward on duty at the Maundy Service



Order of Service Cover.



Prayer sung by the Choir of St James and Cathedral Choir.



June Wilson. Branch Leader at St. Paul's MU Spennymoor (Recipient) and Kathleen Wilson.

York Provincial President Christine Sharp(Recipient) and Kathleen Wilson.

17th April ,Presentation of Maundy Money, Durham Cathedral (Cont)

Doreen Park MU treasurer and lay reader at Burnhope was also a recipient

One of our M.U. members, Judith Lees, has also been chosen to receive Maundy Money at the service. We in St.Barnabas branch are so happy for her. For many years she has been our church organist and retired last December after many years as the Church Treasurer.

Branch Leader June Wilson and Secretary Pauline Story, members of St. Paul's Mothers' Union, Spennymoor, with their Priest on the right, Rev Canon Matt Tarling and on the left their Curate, Rev Lee Trevorrow-Earl. They were two of the 76 ladies who received the Maundy Money from King Charles . Both of us were very surprised when we received the letter from Buckingham Palace and felt very honoured to be receiving this.

All Saints Wearmouth.
Members , Lily Scullion, Catherine Jameson, Doris , Branch Leader Linda Hughes receiving Long service certificates from Kathleen Wilson at their branch meeting.

Thankyou for donations of toiletries and hearts

Marion McConnell from All Saints Newton Hall Durham writes:
At the March meeting All Saints Mother's Union officially welcomed 3 new members. Debbie Duncan, Julie Day and Anne Black.
They were sworn in by the Diocesan Trustee Kathleen Wilson.

Also Eleanor Ross was presented with a certificate for 26 years service to MU.

Following that Kathleen gave a wonderful talk about the Mother's Union in Low Newton Prison. We all learned things we had no idea happened there!
A big thank you to Kathleen for a very entertaining evening.

Christ Church Consett

Held a VE Day indoor party . We had food , stories about VE Day and a wonderful afternoon of celebration, i

Please and Thank you.

Many of you generously make and donate hats for Seafarers – unfortunately, they are not what the Mission requires. They definitely want hats, scarves and fingerless mittens – I've given patterns to Deanery Leaders. So "Please" ask for patterns and make as directed, "Thank you" for your co-operation.

Holy Trinity Branch at 4Louis project in the work room helping with the memory boxes.

We continue to knit hearts in many different colours as requested .

Hearts also donated by All Saints Branch Wearmouth.

Kathleen Wilson.

Darlington Deanery Lady Day service was held on 25th March in St Cuthberta church. Pictured are flag bearers . Mrs Margaret Kidd, Deanery leader (on the left) and Rev. James Harvey who led his first Lady Day the service

MU IMPC service in Durham Cathedral ,Wednesday 14th May 2025.

Lead by Diocesan Chaplain Rev Norma Clee.

Readers :Janice Hardman and Sue Begg. Eucharistic Ministers: Linda Ferries and Kathleen Wilson.

An afternoon of quiet prayer , and special mention of Indoor Members., where their names are placed on the altar. To include Holy Communion.

Lighted candles representation from each MU deanery . Placed on the Shrine of St Cuthbert.

Members in the Choir Stalls

St Andrews Chilton Moor Liz Swinburn writes that 'we arrived early for lunch which we all enjoyed .Lovely day out'

A Prayer for Springtime

Written by the HMP Low Newton branch

Thank you for new creation,
for spring flowers and sunshine,
for baby animals.
Thank you for new relations and friends.
Thank you for new hope.
Thank you for helping us meet new milestones.
We pray for new peace and new bonds to be made.
We pray for fresh starts and new opportunities.
We pray for help in moving forward.
We pray for people preparing for parole;
for understanding, community, and forgiveness.
We pray for families to be reunited.
We pray for love, respect and tolerance for all the people God has made.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.

June Kirby writes…

St Aidan's and St Cuthbert's Mothers' Union held an open meeting in May when their Vicar, The Rev'd Caroline Dick gave a very personal and poignant talk entitled, 'My Mother, the Holocaust and me.' Over 70 people from across The North Durham Team attended, and it was very moving to hear all those voices saying The Mothers' Union prayer together. The meeting inevitably ended with tea and cakes.

I would recommend having an open evening to show people Mothers' Union is a very welcoming and friendly Christian organisation.

Low Newton Branch.

Low Newton Branch continues to grow in prayer, friendship and being together. Numbers fluctuate as in all branches, but, we have new members at each meeting.! Members enjoyed the talk on the King and Queens visit to the Cathedral Maundy Service.

A prayer has been sent to them from the branch. We hope for a reply!

Emily Brailsford , Project Manager at Mary Sumner House visited the branch . Participated in the Service , branch meeting ,and talked to the members. Emily visited the education area with myself and Julia (Tutor) . A great interest was shown in the sewing articles , aprons, cotton bags etc, (bag pictured) . The women explained their work, and were very enthusiastic about what they do. A very busy area, with support from the staff.

A great deal for Emily to absorb and to talk in other areas about Low Newton branch, to enthuse members and friends .

Low Newton banner will be at the Festival service, Rev Rebecca in attendance. Thank you to everyone for their generosity to our work. For your prayers and understanding of this worthwhile branch.

We are all here to help each other. That is what we do! In Jesus name. Amen.

Every Blessing .Kathleen Wilson.

Emily Brailsford with MU Trustees after visit to Low Newton Branch

MU IMPC service in Durham Cathedral ,Wednesday 14th May 2025. (Con't)

St. Paul's MU members attending the Service From left to right is :
Brenda Crooks, June Wilson, Pauline Storey, Ken Wilson and Norma Downs.

It was a beautiful Service led by our Chaplain Rev Norma Clee. There seemed to be more members present this year, some taking part in the Service and at the end, Deanery Leaders were given candles which were lit and placed around the tomb of St. Cuthbert behind the High Altar.

14 in total representing the number of MU Branches in County Durham

Stockton Deanery meeting held at St John the Baptist Egglescliffe.
Photo: Trustees Linda Ferries, Kathleen Wilson , Judith Hay Branch Leader and Edna Thompson led the meeting.

Members from Stockton branches at the Deanery meeting in Egglescliffe.
A fruitful meeting. Followed by delicious refreshments!

Commissioning Service 2025

Archbishop Stephen, Bishop Emma, Rev Angela, Mothers' Union Past Worldwide Presidents, Provincial Presidents, Mothers' Union members, invited clergy and guests, and those of you joining us online via the livestream.

It is my honour to speak to you for a few minutes this afternoon. On behalf of the Board of Trustees who are with me today, I thank you for attending this service and sharing in the celebration of Eucharist and our commissioning this afternoon. It is indeed an important occasion and a time for great joy.

Mothers' Union is all about relationships. When I first became a member, I developed close relationships with other members in my Cathedral Branch. We really didn't know what Mothers' Union was about, but we were all young mothers and father, and we all believed and supported the aim and objects of the society.

As we grew together as a group, our faith grew as well; we learned from one another. That is what true relationship is about. Support, communication, laughter, tears, and everything in between.

Our global Mothers' Union is much the same. Whether we are from Canada, England, Kenya, Sri Lanka or Papua New Guinea, we are one in prayer, one in worship and one in service to others.

There is strength and beauty in diversity. Just look at the diverse group of Trustees who were commissioned here today. We come from different countries and different cultures; we speak English, but we also speak different languages and for some English is our second language. We have different coloured skin, and we have different dress.

But we are united in our faith and in our commitment to this women led movement. We are committed to work in our communities to put an end to poverty, an end to injustice and an end to violence. I would like to share a brief story with you which exemplifies this.

I visited our AMARE members in the South America last October to celebrate their 10th Anniversary. We are almost 150 years old here in the UK, but in South America they have been blessed with 10 years of AMARE membership. The members there are Spanish speaking, and AMARE stands for 'love in action'. They are affiliated with our central charity and are indeed Mothers' Union members.

Diocesan Quiet day held at All Saints Church, Newton Hall.

Lead by Rev. Lilian Clark (long time MU member). Rev Lilian spoke about Elijah , Samuel and David . A reminder to all God chooses you, in whatever he has planned for you. Trust in him he is always there with you.
We continued with A celebration of Holy Communion, Rev Lilian assisted by Eileen Bishop, and music played by Pauline James.
We concluded with Mid day Prayer.
A vote of thanks to Rev Lilian, for a productive time together. Offered hope!
A delicious Faith lunch enjoyed by all.
We had feasted together on words, prayer and friendship. Wonderful!
Kathleen Wilson.

Members of Christ Church Lumley enjoyed an afternoon together and an update on MU prison branch work from Kathleen.
Marilyn Bestford. Branch Leader ,on behalf the members presented a generous donation to Diocesan prison work.
Kathleen Wilson.

This is the photograph of a branch at work!

Members of St Andrew's, Stanley regularly occupy themselves putting together the emergency bags for hospital. It can be an interesting episode in our branch life, I say this with a smile. The items are counted, put onto the table and a system ensues whereby each person puts 1 thing into the bag and passes it on to the next person until the basics are in. Well, that is the plan, however, we've yet to get it to work. It usually descends into a chaotic scramble for the toiletries with some good natured hassle. Eventually, the bags are completed after some shuffling because two soaps are in one bag and a comb has dropped on the floor.

Delivery of these to the hospital is very difficult in terms of parking but we know how important they are, this was reinforced by a recent letter – a gentleman was given one of our bags. He was delighted that he even got his usual brand of toothpaste. He tracked down the donors and wrote thanking us because he was grateful for our little bag of basics. It is so good to know that we are showing love and care as Jesus commanded us..

It's all part of the life in our branch, a branch that still meets weekly and where we keep those in adversity at the heart of all we do. Roll on the next project.

I visited members in the Diocese of Norther Argentina. The AMARE members in that region are primarily Indigenous Wichi and Tobas. They recounted a story of an incident where there was an altercation going on in one of the small towns in the area. The police were in the town centre and were advancing on a group of youth. The police had guns at the ready, and the youth were armed with stones and sticks. The quarrel was intensifying.

Several AMARE members walked right out into the middle of the two groups and started to pray. And they prayed, as only AMARE/Mothers' Union members can do. And then they started talking to both groups on each side of them. And the 'seas calmed, and the storm passed'. That is what Mothers' Union can do. That is who we are. That is what we do wherever we are in the world.

We are 4 million strong in 84 countries. We are on the ground in communities visiting prisons, supporting contact centres to keep families together, teaching women how to speak English and to read and write, campaigning against and bringing awareness to gender-based violence, being a voice for women and empowering women and men in their communities to grow food that will be sustainable when dealing with significant weather events. It is who we are and what we do.

People have asked me, and in particular people who know me, why I have taken on this role. I do it gladly and with joy. Mothers' Union is a way of life for me. It is a way of life for each of the members in this church. Our faith is deepened by being a member. We support each other and we pray.

I close with this prayer from St. Benedict which my dear friend Keith Joyce shared with me several weeks ago. I pray it with you, I pray it with our Trustees, and with those watching online:

O gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you, intellect to understand you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to meditate upon you, and a life to proclaim you, through the power of the spirit of the Lord Jesus. Amen

Thank you!
Kathleen Snow
World Wide president

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Deanery Lady Day service held at St Michael and All Angels church, Houghton

SHIPYARD GIRLS.

Catherine Jameson , a member of All Saints branch Wearmouth was a Shipyard Girl at Southwick , Sunderland Shipyard.

Catherine was in the office as a comptometer Operator and has many stories to tell.

In February this year Catherine was present at the unveiling of 'Molly' the statue placed in the shipyard, as a reminder of the women and their input to industry , and interviewed by the BBC.

I have Catherine's story if members wish to read it.

Thankyou to Catherine and all who worked during and after the difficult war days.
Kathleen Wilson.

Members of Norton St Michael and All Angels welcome newly admitted member Mrs Ann Greenhalgh.

Christian care

for families worldwide

Holy Trinity Branch Southwick. Celebrating their 102nd birthday and 80th Anniversary VE Day.

Special prayers and Readings in thanksgiving for these celebrations.
Kathleen Wilson.