



# A BALEARIC ISLAND REFUGE



**Deborah Chapman shares the passion and vision behind the new MU branch in Palma de Mallorca**

**T**owards the end of 2021, I was contacted by Helen Innes, our diocesan Bishop Robert's wife, and asked if I would consider a trip to Palma, to meet Caroline Gusha, the new chaplain's wife. Caroline was eager to start up a Mothers' Union branch. I was elated!

Despite being geographically the largest diocese in the Church

of England, covering 40 countries, there were only around 200 members in the Diocese in Europe in 2021. This year, hopefully that number will rise to 212 with the new branch in Palma de Mallorca, based at the chaplaincy of St Philip and St James.

I spent a few days with Caroline, her husband Rev Canon Ishanesu Gusha, and their three boys, all of whom had moved from Harare,

Zimbabwe, where Ishanesu had been Dean of the Anglican Cathedral. We wasted no time, despite the pandemic, 'zooming' with Tonie Chandler, the Diocesan President, then with the church wardens and one of the ministry team, the Rev Vivien Larkin, who also makes banners.

Subsequently, the Chaplaincy Council unanimously agreed that a branch should open in Palma. Viv agreed to make Mothers' Union banners for both St George's and St Philip and St James. Just after Christmas, the Gusha family came to visit

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psalm 46.1)*

us in Barcelona and to enable Caroline to meet a few of our members here. We agreed that we would sponsor the Palma branch by providing copies of *United in Prayer and Worship* and MU badges. Bev Jullien sent them out with her son Stephen, who is in ordination training and spent January 2022 with us in Barcelona to work on a research project (see p26 for some of Bev and Stephen's recent adventures). Stephen also brought out some bits of MU material, which had been unearthed, to help with making the banners. This was a great help, since Brexit means that packages are often heavily taxed at our end.

We need to be grateful to our African Anglican sisters who have moved to Europe for many and varied reasons. They are used to being active members of the Mothers' Unions in their own countries and miss the fellowship and outreach when they move to Europe. They are highly motivated and are a wonderful example of unstinting care for those who need it – in the church and beyond. (In Barcelona, Nkechi Nwachukwu, a Nigerian member of our own chaplaincy here at St George's Barcelona, did not let up asking for a Mothers' Union branch until we opened, with over six nationalities represented, in 2018.)

'I was very fortunate to

join the Mother's Union in Zimbabwe in 2013 and it has been great for me learning new things every day,' says Caroline, as she reflects on her journey as an MU member. MU in Zimbabwe has been involved in many projects, as well as lifting many people through prayer. 'Mother's Union has also helped those who are in need, as one of our purposes says it all – *to help those whose family life has met with diversity* – and has also

helped restore broken families. I learnt to be a hard worker and so many women have been empowered. Now that I am in Palma de Mallorca, my prayer is for us as ladies to unite, pray together, work together and help the needy where there is need.'

God is enabling many encouraging links to hold us all together as a worldwide MU fellowship, newly represented on the Balearic island of Mallorca!

## COMING TOGETHER IN KUWAIT

**A** Mothers' Union branch in Kuwait, launched in May 2019, is composed of expats from different parts of the world. 'Our members are so delighted to be part of the Worldwide Mothers' Union family and to hear about the great works by other members across the globe,' says Christine Mbonga.

Christine is the former president of the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Manicaland, Zimbabwe. Her family then moved to Kuwait, where her husband Michael is Chaplain and Rector of St Paul's Anglican Church, in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf.

Owing to the pandemic, some members have moved back to their countries due to unemployment and other challenges. 'At the moment we not doing much, since most of the activities need physical contact,' says Christine.

Activities, where possible, include participating in prison ministry and a deportation centre, distributing dry food and used clothing for the less privileged, conducting Bible studies in person and online, sharing fellowship and holding meetings for lessons on different life skills. Once they are less restricted by the pandemic, they look forward to establishing a children's play centre. They also hope to initiate a communion bread (wafer) making project. 'Our activities have the potential to grow despite the challenges of the pandemic,' says Christine.