

**Reflection September 2023**

My dear friends, here we are going into autumn, a season I quite enjoy. After what can be the hustle and bustle of the summer, perhaps spending time with energetic grandchildren or even great grandchildren, September can bring a quieter spell, a time to reflect, to remember, to relax, a time of change not only for us but for nature. I love to watch the plants in my garden take on the colours of autumn, red, gold and russet. The outline of trees and structural plants become more visible, laying themselves bare and open to the elements. They remind me of how Jesus laid himself bare during the Last Supper and betrayal, the autumn of his earthly life, before his crucifixion. Sometimes it is good for us to lay ourselves bare, to share our hopes for the future, a future where life reflects the colours of autumn. Red, for the most part we tend to think of red as a bright colour, a colour to lift our spirits and those of the people around us. Red is a colour we also associate with love, when we love someone, we often give them red flowers. Think of a beautiful red rose, particularly one which has a wonderful heady smell, I have one of those outside my kitchen window which brings a smile to my face every time I smell it. Gold, part of the colour of a beautiful sunset, just as the light begins to fade, what a wealth of joy that can bring. Russet, the colour of leaves as they lie on the ground, a carpet for our feet and a feast for our eyes as we watch the force of nature, which is the wind, make them dance before being returned to the ground.

For many however it is hard to reconcile the future when all they see are problems and life is not always a bed of sweet smelling roses. After the fires and floods of the summer, many people throughout the world are homeless or have lost people they care about. We have heard vast numbers lay themselves bare as we watch the news showing the devastation caused by natural disasters. This September and into the autumn we will be needed to help, where we can, to rebuild people’s lives helping them to see the beauty in God’s world. It is not possible for us to physically be there, but some of our members living in the countries affected can play a more active role and will do so.

However, this is where prayer comes in for us, but let’s make our prayers full of colour because if our spirits are lifted that will have the affect of uplifting those whose lives have taken on the colour of black and are full of sadness.

In our work with the MU, we know that lives are transformed. This September some of us will meet for the ‘Annual Gathering’, this year taking place in York. This is open to all members but tends to be just members from the UK & Ireland. It is not only a time when we are able to meet up with MU friends from other parts of the country, but we get to hear about some of the work our wonderful hardworking team at Mary Sumner House have been helping to bring to fruition, this year we are being joined by our Worldwide President, Sheran. Sheran has been travelling widely encouraging members, particularly our sisters in Africa, to continue the work they are doing to help their community, her colourful personality uplifting all whom she comes into contact with.

Please pray and give thanks to the Father, who loves us so much, for those he has given to help spread the colour of his love to all we come into contact with.

May He bless us all this September and into the autumn.

Love & Prayers

Jenny

**Let us Pray**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the seasons.

The freshness of Spring, and new life.

The colours of Autumn,

Nature in all its splendour,

The wonder of winter, and the Holy birth.

Thank you for the seasons of our lives and the same faithfulness to us,

As in all your creation. Amen

God of stillness and trust, we ask that in this hurried world, where many are filled with anxiety, uncertainly and doubt, may we experience that true peace that only you can give us. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN

Heavenly Father, we ask you to bless our Worldwide President as she carries out the work you have set before her, give her wisdom and bring her peace. We pray too for those who work at Mary Sumner House, particularly our CEO and the members of the Senior Leadership Team. We ask in Jesus’ name. AMEN

