



Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families



Southwark News

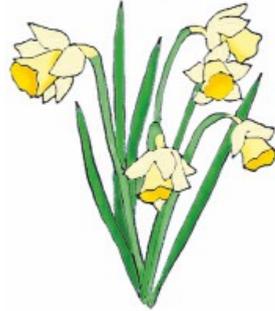
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Contents

Front Cover: MU Event in the Grounds of Southwark Cathedral

Pages

- 3 Letter from Our President
- 5 MULO? What's That?
- 6 New Banner
MU Retreat at Wychcroft
- 7 Croydon Refugee Day Centre
MU Cathedral Prayers
- 8 A Reflective Poem
- 9 100th Anniversary Celebrations
Diocesan Members & Diocesan Members Groups
- 10 Wanted
The Joy of Reuniting
- 12 Four Generations of MU Members
A Letter of Thanks
- 13 Emergency Prayer Chain
- 14 Sutton Women's Refuge
The Practice of the Presence of God



Back Cover: Diocesan Details

Forthcoming Events

- Sat 21 April** Festival Eucharist at Southwark Cathedral
11.30am
- Thurs 5 July** Southwark AGM at Trinity House, 11.00am
- Sat 13 Oct** Diocesan Council at St Matthew's, Redhill
11.00am

Letter from Our President

Dear Friends

Where does the time go? Already we find ourselves on the third year of a triennial which means Elections! It won't be long before we have to ask one another or even ask ourselves to take on a different or new role to keep our wonderful movement going forward. We can all say how difficult it is to get leaders or we can pray in faith and ask God who He wants us to ask and He may say 'I Want You'. It is a blessing in Mothers' Union that we have the 3/6 year rule to enable us to be regularly refreshed with new leadership.

At the end of the year I shall be standing down and therefore we will need a Diocesan President for 2019/21. We will also need Vice Presidents for Croydon and Kingston. There will be other vacancies on the Trustee Board as well. I am confident in Christ that we will fill these posts by the end of the year. I am not so confident about branch leadership and yet the same rule applies but in many cases has been bent and broken. Sadly I have seen too many branches close for the lack of new leadership and vision. Recently, a young mum said to me that she was sorry as she could not attend a daytime meeting because she was helping out at her young son's school. I said don't say sorry, because you are serving families by doing that important work. I encouraged her to use our prayer diary and attend and support whatever MU event she could. Too many times in these past two years, younger women have said to me about the older age of members and the times of the meetings that has put them off joining. We, older members cannot change our age, but we can change, with God's help, our attitude and times of our meetings. Mothers' Union is so much more than meetings – it is about prayer, service and giving and we thank God for His good ideas which come to any of us, how ever old we are.

At our October Council we spoke about 'why' and for 'what purpose' do we have 'Speakers' and we were reminded that we should focus on Family Matters and always hold these meetings for parents and others to attend at a time convenient for them. We all need to be far more flexible in arranging meetings and events. This year's

there is 'In Mary Sumner's Footsteps' and we have some excellent helpful resources.

In February some of us attended a MULOA Event which Liz Pullen has written about in this issue. We will be taking it out to branch leaders and others in May and June and it will remind us of our roots and Mary Sumner and it will strengthen us to go forward in prayer and service. If you have served six years as a leader put your faith and trust in God and let go and hopefully hand over to a new leader. If after this year of prayer there is still no one to take over as leader, consider joint leadership or having a committee led branch. As a last resort you may have to close your branch and those who still want to pray and support families can become Diocesan members. You can learn more about Diocesan Members and Groups in this issue of Southwark News. Also at Council we encouraged you to buy Families First (which pays for and delivers Families Worldwide). It is a great magazine to read and then pass on to a younger family. We know that younger members have joined us after reading Families First which is also 'on line' along with almost everything you need to know about Mothers' Union.



As well as praying for new leaders may we give thanks and continue to pray for all our work supporting families especially giving thanks for Away From It All providing great memories and for our care and compassion at 'Tea at 3' Evelina Children's hospital. In St Luke's Gospel, Chapter 11, Jesus teaches His disciples to pray and after the Lord's Prayer, as we know it, He says in verses 9 and 10 - So I say to you; Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Let us all give thanks that our Lord hears us and answers our prayers. So we go forward in confidence trusting in our Lord Jesus Christ. With love and prayers as we serve together.

Cynthia Smith

MULOA? What's That?

This was a question we were asking on the way to the Christian Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

Cynthia Smith, Diocesan President, Althea Smith, Woolwich Representative Trustee and I had the huge privilege of attending the Britain and Ireland pilot of this worldwide process, already begun abroad. MULOA stands for *Mothers' Union Listening Observing Acting*, and is the name of a process exploring the essence of what Mothers' Union is and how members can uniquely contribute to making a real difference in people's lives throughout whole communities.

About 130 members gathered from all over the British Isles for the three-day conference where we first focused on connecting to God and the MU calling, and understanding the MULOA process. We were then divided into 'family groups' where we shared stories of where MU had touched the lives of others, drawing out who had been helped and the change which was created in people's lives, and also some of the hindrances which made the work more difficult. Finally, everyone present made a commitment for their own work, as well as planning to take the process forward within their dioceses.

All members in Southwark will hear more of this process during the year, and how to take it forward within their branches and communities.

The whole conference began, continued and ended with looking towards God. There were prayers, Bible studies and reflections throughout, but the high point came at the very end with a dramatic reading of Peter walking on the water – from Peter's, rather than the Gospel-writer's, point of view. We realised that God had founded his Church on a flawed individual who had let him down, not once, but many times. Not only Peter, but every one of us as well. We thank God for his forgiveness, forbearance and guidance, leading us forward to serve him as he deserves.

Liz Pullen *Faith & Policy Co-ordinator*



New Banner

Towards the end of last year a new banner was acquired by the Deanery. Pictured here is the first outing of the new Tandridge Deanery Banner. We displayed it behind the stall at the Fair for St Bartholomew's in Burstow on Saturday 18 November. The next visit was to St Mary's, Oxted on Sunday 25 November.

Margaret Hobson

MU Retreat at Wychcroft

Shirley Tillman and I from St Barnabas, Sutton Branch, along with Pam Smith from St Nicholas, Sutton Branch spent a few days on the Mothers' Union Retreat at Wychcroft in October last year. The accommodation and the food were wonderful.

The Retreat was beautifully led by the Mothers' Union Diocesan Chaplain, the Revd Esther Foss. The theme of the Retreat was "Faith in Action" which was the Mothers' Union Theme of the Year. There were sessions of meditation, listening, discerning, responding and fruitful faith. Esther gave us a short introduction about each one and then we had time to meditate on them and discover how they can be applied to everyday life and how we can put them into action.

It was a really wonderful time and, if you would like to go on the next retreat, the dates are:- 16-18 October 2018.

Cathy Brown

Croydon Refugee Day Centre

In November 2017 MU Christ Church Purley Branch was delighted to host a talk by Peter Hall of the Croydon Refugee Day Centre. He gave a fascinating talk about the varied work of the Centre, the type of clients who attend, and the way that volunteers turn up 'out of the blue' in answer to prayer!

The services offered at the Centre include English lessons for women and a crèche for their children, activities for older children and hot lunches on Tuesdays. Clothes and baby equipment are also available.

The talk was open to all members of the church and followed by a fellowship lunch where it was agreed that all donations for the meal would go to Croydon Refugee Day Centre. Peter told us that the £140.98 raised would be used to purchase Oyster cards to enable Asylum seekers to travel to visit the Centre.

We would recommend other branches organise an open meeting and invite Peter to come and speak.

Email address: peter@croydonrefugeedaycentre.co.uk

Sue Keeler

MU Cathedral Prayers

Prayers are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month 11.45am-12.15pm in the Harvard Chapel, Southwark Cathedral. All are welcome.

Led by

- 28 March - no MU prayers (Holy Week)
- 25 April - Kingston
- 23 May - Reigate
- 27 June - Croydon



A Reflective Poem

Mothers' Union

This poem was posted on the Mothers' Union Facebook page. It was written by a visiting speaker in Manchester Diocese, who admitted she knew nothing about the MU other than what she had picked up from Church notice boards.

If ever we needed reminding how important it is to keep our notices tidy, interesting and up to date, this is it!

Margaret Simmonds
Webmaster



Many thousands are our numbers,
Yet together we are one

Offering love and prayer and fellowship
And faith to build upon.

Touching hearts and lives and futures
Where our banners fly unfurled;

Here within our own communities
And all across the world.

Ever loving, ever giving,
Ever sowing God's good seed,

Reaching out to those in peril,
Reaching out to those in need.

Supporting and encouraging,
Through good times and through bad;

United as a family
Through happy times and sad.

Never falt'ring in our quest
To leave the world a brighter place;

In our bid to spread God's love and care,
Throughout the human race.

Our members all around the world
Join hands in love and prayer;

None shall ever come between us
And the fellowship we share.

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100th Anniversary Celebrations

The MU at St Mary Magdalene with St Martin celebrated their 100th Anniversary on 27 January 2018, with a communion service celebrated by the Revd Jan Wilson. This was followed by a ploughman's lunch.



It was lovely being joined by members of other branches in the Deanery and we thank them for their support along with that of the Diocesan President, Vice Presidents and Deanery Leader. It made it a very special day.

Anne Kidman

Diocesan Members & Diocesan Members Groups

During 2017 your Southwark Trustees have spent some time investigating and establishing a pattern for a new style of membership to be known as **Diocesan Members Groups**. Our exploration of this came about with the potential closing of a large branch without sufficient officers. We came to realise that these could also be appropriate for three or more new members in a parish or benefice where a branch has not yet opened as well as for existing members when a branch is closing or going into abeyance. Trustees have now agreed this alternative form of membership of Southwark Mothers' Union for members who are not part of a branch and who are not already Deanery Members.

A Diocesan Members' Group provides the opportunity for individual members to meet and support one another and families in their community and beyond without a Branch Leader or

Treasurer. Such a Group would need to nominate or a member volunteer to be the point of contact for occasional one-off invitations. The subscription for Diocesan members is £36.00 and this will include Families First, Families Worldwide, Southwark News, (all posted) and any other notices appertaining to MU, (posted/emailed). Any short notice of an event will be sent to the contact via email where possible.

In 2017 we had 8 members in our pilot Group (Dormansland) and 29 individual Diocesan Members.

We are looking for a volunteer to be the Co-ordinator with email and internet access for Diocesan Members and Diocesan Members Groups who would be able to use the resources of our office in Trinity House in liaison with our MU Diocesan Secretary.

Penny Lohead – VP Reigate

WANTED

A Co-ordinator for Diocesan Members and Diocesan Members Groups

Responsible for administering the annual membership process as well as handling regular mailing of Southwark MU News and Diocesan mailings. These will include information about (and invitations to attend) Council meetings, the AGM, Festival services at the cathedral and other diocesan and national MU events to all Diocesan Members including those forming the new Diocesan Members' Groups.

***Please contact Anne Love
if you are interested in taking on this new role.***

The Joy of Reuniting

When I was young and single I used to take out a boy from Reedham Orphanage in Purley, a school for fatherless children. Each month I would collect him, take him home or maybe go shopping. Years later, my husband and I took him to Trafalgar Square, London Zoo and many other places. When we moved to

Wallington, it was usually a picnic in Beddington park where we played Pooh sticks and fished for tiddlers.

The last time I saw him, our first child was one, that was 57 years ago. When we phoned again we were told that he had been moved to be nearer to his Mother. We were sad after so many years of friendship, especially as we were not given an address and worried that he would think we no longer cared. Each year, on his birthday, I would say, "Happy birthday Alex. I wonder where you are?"

A year ago I was invited to a birthday lunch at the Croydon Park Hotel. At the next table there was a group of people and the gentleman next to me went to inquire about them.....

"It is about a school in Purley."....."Not Reedham?" "Yes"

I went over to meet them and told them that up until 57 years ago I used to take out Alex Ogden from the school once a month. "We are still in touch with him" was the reply. I was nearly in tears. I gave him my email address and asked him to forward it.

For the last year, we have been emailing each other. He remembers us and where we went. He has taught his grandchildren how to play Pooh sticks and told them about us.

I booked a hotel in Lincoln and, after 57 years, we met in the lounge. HUGS!!! We went out to lunch and talked in turn about our lives. After a bad start, he finally obtained degrees in engineering. He lives near Lincoln with his wife and visits his family in Catford. This week we met for lunch in Croydon Park Hotel with my daughter.

This year, I was able to say, "Happy birthday Alex. I now know where you are". He was very touched that I had remembered him after so many years.

Pamela Vernon

The Mothers' Union is encouraging us to be focused on peace and reconciliation, not only across the world but with our own families. Sadly many families have broken relationships within them and we are called to persevere with prayers of thanksgiving for forgiveness and healing for our families.

Cynthia Smith

Four Generations of MU Members

At a recent Sunday morning service at St Oswald's Church, Cheam, two members, Marianne Adams, a former Deanery Leader and Sheila Lowe, Branch Secretary, received 40 Year Long Service Certificates. One of the branch members, Fiona Webster, came to the service proudly wearing *four* Mothers' Union members' badges.



These were a Mothers' Union family heirloom; they were her own badge, her mother, Jane Hallett's badge, her grandmother, Winifred Mitchell's badge and her great grandmother, Edith Radford's badge.

Edith was born in 1869 and was a churchwarden at St Mary's Church, Clyst St Mary in Devon in 1922 -29 and must have been one of the very early members of Mothers' Union.

Janice Clarke

A Letter of Thanks

Dear Cynthia,

I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU from PACT at HMP Belmarsh and HMP Isis. We are delighted and extremely thankful for your ongoing contributions of toys to the children and families of the inmates.

Throughout the years we have seen many charities come and go, but the Mothers' Union continue to be a great support of the work we do within the visitor centre and to combat re offending.

The families were truly taken aback by the generosity that you have shown them, and considering the circumstances you had shone light in a small place of darkness. And for that they ask I pass on their many thanks and gratitude to all members.

We can not thank you and the team in the Mothers' Union enough. We look forward to continue working with you by distributing the gifts on your behalf.

Kind regards,

Monique and the whole team at HMP Belmarsh and Isis.

Emergency Prayer Chain

Southwark Diocese Mothers' Union Prayer Chain was started a couple of years ago. Its purpose was (and still is) to pray for members and others in time of need. Whether this is through illness or other circumstances, when the body is weak and the mind is so fatigued that even the smallest of tasks seem beyond our strength; when we try to pray and our mind drifts to the discomfort, anxiety or worry. It is good to know that because of God's kindness to us, our prayer can also touch heaven.

The main contacts are:

Olu Akitoye - oluakitoye@yahoo.com

Tel: 01689 332091 / 07466 923042

Victoria Adejobi - vadejobi@aol.com

Tel: 020 8673 3028 / 07944 312626

On receipt of a prayer request a list of prayer volunteers are contacted who, in turn, pray for fourteen days. Only Christian names are used and details of prayers involving personal matters are kept in complete confidence. Any of the many ways to pray could be used, as guided by the Spirit: formal prayers learned through the Church, scripture reading and meditation, fasting, abstaining, self denial, song, listening to God in your heart, meditation in nature or original prayers from the heart.

We welcome anyone as a member of the Prayer Volunteer team and those interested in taking part can get in touch with the contacts listed above. Few things are as uplifting as knowing that someone is praying for you. We are keen to hear from as many of you as possible – for prayer requests and to join us as a Prayer Volunteer.

Victoria Adejobi - Prayer Volunteer Contact

Sutton Women's Refuge

One of Sutton Deanery's projects is a link with Sutton Women's Refuge. In the past, members from St Dunstan's, Cheam branch have gone into the refuge to show the women and children how to cook. Fairy cake making was the most popular.

This year, Homebase donated two Christmas trees to the refuge and the refuge asked if Mothers' Union members could donate crackers, biscuits, sweets and baubles for women and children.



Here is a letter received from the refuge for the gifts and also a card that one of the mums who is a very talented artist made:-

"We had such fun decorating the Christmas trees and it helped us make new good memories of our first Happy Christmas. You made such a difference to a very special time of year for our mums and children. For most of them this will have been the first Christmas without fear and trauma and I can't tell you how thrilled they all were to have beautiful real trees, decorate them and the rooms and also have gifts and chocolates. A massive thank you to you and all who donated and of course to Homebase."

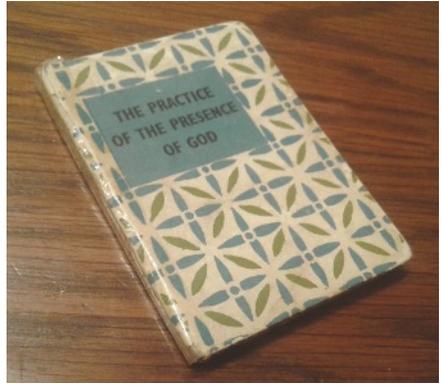
Janice Clarke

The Practice of the Presence of God

I treasure this little book (3x4ins) which I bought for half a crown in 1957. Entitled *The Practice of the Presence of God*, it contains the conversations and letters of Brother Lawrence. I have come to appreciate the wisdom of Brother Lawrence who learned through much suffering to do all for the love of God and recommended 'that we should establish ourselves in a sense of God's presence by continually conversing with Him.'

Placing God at the centre of everything he did, Brother Lawrence found that even his work in the kitchen (to which he had a great aversion) proved to become a time of joy and contentment. In fact by focusing on the presence of God at all times, he found that appointed times of prayer were no different to other times because he had trained himself to continually praise and bless God. His seemingly simple way of living in the presence of God continues to challenge me.

Who was this Brother Lawrence? Born Nicholas Herman of humble origins, he served as a soldier and then as a footman but by his own admission, was no good as he was clumsy and broke everything. He joined the Carmelite Community in Paris in 1666, taking the name of Brother Lawrence. He thought he would be made to suffer for his awkwardness and sins by giving up life and its pleasures to God, 'but that God had disappointed him, he having met with nothing but satisfaction in that state'.



During times in my life when there seemed no time to pray or be quiet, Brother Lawrence's little book has encouraged me. Talking to God about all our concerns throughout the day, asking His guidance in all we do and praising Him is one thing but to simply to keep one's mind still and enjoy the presence of God, requires a further commitment. Brother Lawrence admitted to failing often, but with effort of will and trust in God's grace, he continued to practice of the presence of God until it became for him, second nature.

*Prayer; May all we do be for love of you, O Lord.
Help us to learn to be still and enjoy being
in your Presence.
Amen*

Ann Fernihough VP Kingston Area

THE MOTHERS' UNION SOUTHWARK DIOCESE

Linked with the Dioceses of Ekiti and Ogori-Magongo in Nigeria, Machakos in Kenya, Harare in Zimbabwe, Phulbani in India and Oxford in UK.

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