

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families



Southwark News

No 270 Autumn/Winter 2025

Contents

*Front Cover: Sponsored Walk around Richmond Park
by MU Members from St Andrews, Ham*

Pages

- 3 Letter from our President
- 4 Grandparents Day
- 5 MU Cathedral Prayers
Southwark Monthly Prayers
- 6 Sponsored Walk
- 7 Summer of Hope Cream Tea
New MU Logos
- 8 Meeting the Bishop of Harare
- 9 Members' Meeting in October
- 10 St Mary Magdalene Celebrations
- 12 A Very special Garden Party
- 13 Moses Basket
- 14 Mary7 Sumner Day
Join Our Team - Advert
- 15 MU Prayer Network
Reflection - Season of Creation

Forthcoming Events -2026

Sat 14 Feb..... MU/SAGE Grandparenting Day – 10:45am,
St Francis Horley

Tues 24 Feb.....Diocesan Lent Quiet Day – 11am - 4pm,
Southwark Cathedral

Wed 4 March.....Members Meeting, Trinity House –11am – 2:30pm

Sat 9 May.....Festival Service -11.30 am, Southwark Cathedral

Wed 10 June.....National MU 150th Anniversary Evensong -
St Paul's Cathedral

Thurs 11 June...National MU 150th Anniversary Gathering - ,
Emmanuel Centre

Please send your material for the Spring Edition by

Editor: Val@utopia-creative.com

Letter from Our President

Dear Friends,

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: Ecclesiastes 3:1

As I write this letter to you I am sitting at my desk at Wychcroft and looking down the lane seeing stunning autumn colours as the leaves on the trees turn, enjoying our annual Retreat 'reflecting on the seasons of our soul'. As Autumn takes its hold we as a church look towards our season of Remembrance in November, followed by Advent as we prepare to celebrate the day God came among us to change the world for ever.



I am mindful that Mothers' Union too has its seasons and I have brought away to read a delightful book celebrating the 50th Jubilee in 1926. The writer gives credit, not only to our founder Mary Sumner, but to those who supported her, worked alongside her and succeeded her. This year is the 120th anniversary of the founding of Mothers' Union Southwark and In our monthly prayers in the Harvard Chapel we remember those members who have gone before praying *"Thank you for their witness, example and service. Help us to honour them by looking to the future, as we seek to express our Christian faith through supporting and helping families and communities worldwide."*

This year we have mourned the passing of our dear Sally Steele bidding farewell in a joyful service at St Dunstan's. We celebrate and thank God for her faithful service to Mothers' Union, particularly as past Vice President for Croydon, our Action and Outreach Co-ordinator and her passionate work as our AFIA lead. A new season begins and whilst we seek at new Action and Outreach Co-ordinator Sue Newman has taken up the AFIA work and succeeded in sending families on day trips and an autumn break. Joy Morral alongside Sue will be our new Joint Vice-Presidents for Croydon.

I began my term as your Diocesan President in Winter. Through Spring and Summer I have enjoyed visiting many branches and still have visits booked for Autumn and Winter. We have shared busy and fulfilling Members' Meetings and our AGM, with two Saturday mornings welcoming many Branch Officers/Leaders to informal training and sharing sessions in Trinity House. There are signs of growth across the diocese and along with your Vice Presidents, I look forward to visiting you all over the next two years, particularly next year as we celebrate the 150th anniversary. In the meanwhile I thank you for all you are doing in the name of Mothers' Union.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21

Yours in faith

Penny

Grandparents Day

On Saturday 4th October. St Barnabas, Sutton Mothers' Union celebrated Grandparents Day by using the Mothers' Union service. All the Grandparents there were presented with a candle in recognition of their contribution to family life community and helping to pass on the faith to the next generation.



Janice Clarke

MU Cathedral Midday Prayers

At the September Midday Prayers in Southwark Cathedral, the prayers were lead by St Barnabas, Sutton Branch. Members of the families of the two St Barnabas Members, Marjorie Udall and Carole King, who were having their tributes read out, joined in the service. Carole King's sister, Sarah even read the second reading.. Afterwards, each family was given copies of the tributes which are included in the MU Diocese Remembrance Book. Here is a photo of Penny Lohead with the families. Afterwards, they joined members for lunch and a chat in the Refectory.



Janice Clarke

Southwark Monthly MU Prayers

MU midday Prayers are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month in the Harvard Chapel in Southwark Cathedral at 11.45am - 12.15pm - All are welcome. - However, the prayers continue to be distributed to branches beforehand for their own use.

	Led by		
2026	28 Jan	-	Croydon
	25 Feb	-	Croydon
	25 Mar	-	Woolwich
	22 April	-	Kingston



Please Note - there is no access for wheelchair users in the Harvard Chapel. If members who use wheelchairs want to attend Cathedral Prayers, the Cathedral has to be notified in advance and the Retrochoir would be prepared for the service

Sponsored Walk

In the summer four of us from St Andrew's Ham Mothers' Union, completed a 10 mile sponsored walk around Richmond Park. This was to raise money both for the MU Summer of Hope Appeal and to support our local (Richmond) domestic abuse refuge, as part of our RISE UP campaign.



Between St Andrew's, our own church, and two local churches, St Richard's and St Peter's, whose congregations also supported us, we raised £1565!



Before the walk I was in touch with Katie Drew, of the Melanesian Mission, who had asked if we could raise £900 to pay for 10 sewing machines to send to the Solomon Islands. We have achieved that goal. I attach the information she sent us about the sewing workshops that the Mothers' Union are supporting in the Solomon Islands. The rest of the money will be divided between the main Summer of Hope Appeal and paying for the "moving in" packages and other resources for the women taking shelter in our local Richmond domestic abuse refuge. We are hoping that Katie will be able to come to St Andrew's to receive the cheque in person.



Sr Veronica, from the Community of the Sisters of the Church in the Solomon Islands, has a long-standing connection with St Andrew's and has said how much she values the work of the Mothers' Union in the Solomon Islands. She will be visiting us on 7th September.

Ursula Hodges

SUMMER OF HOPE CREAM TEA

On Saturday 9th August (Mary Sumner Day - the founder of the Mothers' Union) a cream tea was held in St Barnabas Church Halls, Sutton in aid of the Mothers' Union "Summer of Hope" Appeal for the women in the war torn Democratic Republic of Congo. Women are forever having to flee their homes with nothing but their children and a handful of seeds. The Mothers' Union Literacy and Development Scheme, helps them survive, grow food, learn to read and be numerate, build businesses and raise families in faith.

About 40 people, including members from St John's, Belmont, St Oswald's, Cheam and St Nicholas, Sutton Mothers' Union branches joined St Barnabas Branch members for the cream tea.

The afternoon began with an account of how Mary Sumner started the Mothers' Union and what it does today, plus details of its work in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The cream tea was laid out on tables with scones, clotted cream, tea, milk and a variety of 4 different homemade jams. There was colouring and sewing, MU seeds to plant and balloons for the children. The afternoon ended with a free picture bingo game. £378.60 was raised for the "Summer of Hope" Appeal.

Janice Clarke

MU New Logos - *See the website for the correct way of using them.*



Meeting the Bishop of Harare

On 13th November, at St Nicholas' Church, Strood, Mary and I enjoyed an evening with the Diocese of Rochester celebrated their Anglican Communion links, in particular, with the Diocese of Harare. As you know Southwark Mothers' Union is linked with Harare through the MU Wave of Prayer. It was interesting to hear from the Link Co-ordinator, the Revd Christine Allen, about their visit in the summer. The Bishop of Rochester, Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, then



'interviewed' Bishop Farai Mutamiri and later in the service Bishop Farai preached.

Afterwards, we enjoyed their celebratory cake and I was able to give Bishop Farai a greetings card on behalf of us all, along with a few badges, for his wife Letwini who is

their Diocesan President. The Bishop had earlier been gifted a communion set for the Diocese, a bag of clergy collars which are hard to come by, along with a sewing machine for his own use, as he makes his own clergy shirts and vestments. It was a very enjoyable evening and we were made very welcome.

Penny Lohead



Members' Meeting 11th October 2025

The Members' Meeting held at St Andrew's Church, Ham in the Kingston Area was preceded by a short act of worship led by the Vicar, the Revd Alice Pettit. She has kindly given her permission for her homily to be included in MU Southwark News.



Today we commemorate Ethelburga, who in the 7th Century, was born into a wealthy family with royal connections. She was the sister of Erconwald, the Bishop of London. She became abbess of the double monastery at Barking (a religious house for both men and women, with a common superior). The double monastery maintained strict segregation of the sexes, but it also allowed for the sharing of resources for worship and protection from external forces. Ethelburga had joined the monastery at an early age, and in the time of her stay, Barking became celebrated for the fervour of the nuns in both faith and study.

Bede, writing 70 years after her death, wrote about her and honoured her for her holy lifestyle as well as for the miracles that surrounded her life. Bede noted that 'none who knew her holy life can doubt that when she departed this life the gates of her heavenly home opened at her coming'.

May the same be said of us!

With acknowledgment to *Saints on Earth: A biographical companion to Common Worship* by John H Darch and Stuart K Burns.

Bede: Ecclesiastical History, IV.7

Liz Pullen

Celebrating The 19th Anniversary and the Enrolment of New Members of the St Mary Magdalene, Mothers' Union.

On September 21, 2025, St. Mary Magdalene Mothers' Union, hosted a heartfelt celebration marking its 19th anniversary. With approximately twenty three existing MU members, at this special service, two new members were enrolled. We are grateful to God for adding to our numbers. The event, held in the beautiful church hall, was a testament to the enduring commitment and impactful service of the Mothers' Union, within the community.

The day began with a solemn, yet uplifting service led by Bishop Michael, who offered wisdom and encouragement. His presence added a spiritual depth to the occasion, reminding everyone of the significance of the Mothers' Union in promoting family life and Christian values.

Sister Lara set the tone for the readings with the first reading, delivering it gracefully and with poise. The gospel reading was followed by Sister Sandra, who presented it, resonating deeply with those in attendance. Reinforcing the message of hope and community spirit. The spiritual festivities continued with a heartfelt prayer session led by Sister Wunmi, invoking blessings for the new members and the ongoing work of the Mothers' Union.



Following the service, the Diocesan president, Penny Lohead, took to the stage to lead an enrolment session for the two new members. She welcomed them warmly and provided a brief yet insightful talk about the mission and the various initiatives the

Mothers' Union undertakes to support families and communities. This moment was about adding members and deepening the sense of belonging and purpose within the community.

As the celebration drew to a close, branch leader Marina delivered a thoughtful vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all who had contributed to the success of the Mothers' Union over the years. Her words served as a reminder of the collaborative spirit that has characterised the Mothers' Union journey.

The event concluded with various satisfying refreshments that brought everyone together, fostering a warm fellowship and joy. Friends old and new mingled, sharing stories and laughter in celebration of the accomplishments and aspirations of the St Mary's Magdalene Mothers' Union.

The 19th anniversary marked a milestone and a celebration of community, faith, and a commitment to serving, leaving all attendees inspired for the future ahead.



**TO GOD BE
THE GLORY!!**

Marina Kamara

A very special Garden Party

Courtesy of the Revd Michael Roper, branch members of St John the Baptist, Old Malden, enjoyed a splendid afternoon tea in the Vicarage garden. It was a beautiful hot summer's day and after sipping tea out of dainty antique porcelain cups and eating delicious cake from matching plates, members were handed tinkling glasses of prosecco. This was all to celebrate an astonishing 383 years of service to Mothers' Union! Certificates dated March 25th, Lady Day, were awarded to all but one of the members: Lynn is an enthusiastic new member who is looking forward to being awarded her own certificate in due course. Muriel is our longest-serving member at 64 years: very few can say that!



Congratulating each other from left to right in ascending order of length of service are Lynn, Pauline, Janet, Pat, Marilyn, Sheila E, Sheila H, Beth, Monica, Liz and Muriel. Our friend Delia, with 28 years' service, was unfortunately not able to be present.

With grateful thanks to Michael and Ben for their hospitality, also their gardening and photographic skills!

Liz Pullen

Moses Basket

At the end of September St Mildred's Mothers' Union received this plea from Hestia, the Charity who run the Women's Refuge:

"We have recently welcomed a young mum-to-be into refuge who, like many women, has arrived with nothing. She is currently 24 weeks pregnant and has no items at all prepared for her baby. Things have been very difficult for her and she does not have a support network around her at this time.

Would it be possible for you and your lovely team to put together a small donation for her and her baby? Any contribution would make a huge difference and would be so gratefully received.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your previous donations to the women at the refuge. Without your kindness and generosity, we would not be able to provide many of the essential items that women and their children need when starting over."

As ever, the whole Parish rallied round to help, meaning we were able to fill a Moses Basket to overflowing within 10 days!



Margaret Simmons

Mary Sumner Day

This year the celebration afternoon tea, for Mary Sumner Day, was held in St Mildred's church hall. There were about 30 members present, from 5 different branches. At the same time we also celebrated, two Golden Weddings, two Diamond Weddings and a 90th birthday! After expenses for Hall rent, we raised £151 for AFIA



Margaret Simmons

Join Our Team: Action and Outreach Unit Co-ordinator & Area Representatives

We are currently seeking a passionate and proactive member of the MU to join our team of Trustees as **Action and Outreach Unit Co-ordinator**. In this role, you will support project organisers across the Diocese, helping them to reach out to more of those families in need and providing regular updates at Trustee Meetings.

Additionally, we have exciting opportunities for **Area Representatives**:

- **Two Croydon Area Representatives**
- **One Woolwich Area Representative**

Area Reps play a key role on the Trustee Board, providing vital support to their Area Vice President and contributing to the strategic direction of our work.

If you're passionate about making a difference and want to be part of our collaborative and dedicated team, we'd love to hear from you.

To apply or for more information, please contact **Rosemary Walsh, Secretary**, at mu@southwark.anglican.org.

Southwark Diocese MU Prayer Network

If you have a prayer request, please now email
mu@southwark.anglican.org

Season of Creation – Autumn

Autumn is usually considered to be the precursor of winter. Well, perhaps it is by the time it gets to December, but really, just think about how the world looked at the beginning of Autumn: brilliant colours in trees everywhere, song birds swooping around and the grass still needing mowing. Even the sweet peas were still in full flower.

I was brought up in deepest Hampshire where I had to walk a mile through (often muddy) fields of cows or corn or grass depending on the rotation, to reach the bus stop for school. In those days, Harvest Festival was normally held once the harvest was in which could be as early as mid-September. Arriving in London to go to university was quite a shock as in the local churches the festival was always held on the first Sunday in October ... much too late in my opinion! But now I can understand as Harvest Festival falls at the end of the Season of Creation, dedicated to God the Creator and Sustainer of all life, when we have learned during the previous four weeks about God's wonderful creation because of his love for us. We have learned to honour him for his wonderful works, and we have learned how woefully we have fallen short in caring for his creation. This year the theme was Peace in Creation: Creation will find peace when justice is restored. Justice equates to our treatment of people and the environment: We need to love our neighbour as ourselves, both human and the world around us, .

During our recent holiday in Switzerland Anthony and I were frequently brought up short on our walks, by finding brass plaques

riveted into stones. These plaques had a verse of praise to God – often from the psalms - followed by a short interpretation. Would that they could be found here too, so that there would be constant written reminders of God’s goodness to us!

I finish with pictures of two of these plaques and the prayer which we have had at the end of each of our creationtide services



Come and see what the Lord has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals. Psalm 66:5

In the beauty of nature we see God’s outstretched hand. He wants to love his children home.

Everything that has breath, praise the Lord! Psalm 150:6

Our land with its splendour, its mountains, its fields, are the witnesses of your power, the traces of your fatherly goodness. Everything in us worships you: you have done great things for us.



Create in us a new heart and a new vision, O God, that the gifts of your Spirit may work in us and renew the face of the earth..

*May we be one with you so that our work is yours
and your work is ours.*

*Lead us to transform our lives to reflect your glory in Creation;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who is alive with you and the
holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen*

Liz Pullen