

# Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families



## Southwark News

No 259 Spring 2021

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*Front Cover: MU Banner at Southwark Cathedral*

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## ***Forthcoming Events***

Sat	2 Oct	Diocesan Council St Peter's Norbiton
Tues/Thurs	12/14 Oct	Diocesan Retreat Wychcroft
Sat	16 Oct	Festival Service Southwark Cathedral 11.30am
Thurs	2 Dec	Advent Service St Mildred's Addiscombe 11.00am



# Letter from Our President

*Dear Friends,*

Although it is now spring, I hope I can still say Happy New Year to all especially to those I have not seen in person or virtually. As always, let me begin by asking “how are you all doing?” It is a year since our first lockdown and we are still in lockdown with the hope that things will get better soon with children and parents rejoicing that schools are open once more.

If we were asked to give a summary of the past year, what would we be saying? Yes, we will talk about the pandemic and how it has changed our lives. There would be a lot of laments, but hopefully amidst the laments, there will be room to give thanks. So talking about giving thanks we are enjoined to give thanks always (1st Thessalonians 5:18) says “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”. As we all know, giving thanks is not always easy especially when things are not going well. We feel sad and angry, not just with ourselves but with our family and friends and sometimes with God. We have not been called to give thanks at particular moments only for some things, but in everything good and bad. Take a look around you now, what can you thank God for?



In this pandemic and with lockdown, we have managed to reinvent ourselves. Participation in zoom meetings has increased and I want to say hoorah and a big thank you to our elderly members who have mastered the art of zoom meetings and are doing well. Of course we do realize that by zooming all the time, a few have been left behind as they have not been able to join. Thanks to branch leaders and members who have been able to distribute personally or send mail to ensure that nobody has been left out.

As disciples of Jesus, we are expected to spread the good news of Jesus. As well as doing this, may I ask, have we been spreading the good news of the vaccine? Over 20 million have been vaccinated so far, what an achievement! However, we have so many people who are refusing to be vaccinated. Please help people to know it is ok.

Finally, there is a lot happening on the MU central website. There are lots of useful resources for various things, please visit.

As we seek to build hope and confidence, let our faith in God give us the security we need. Philippians 1:6 “I am certain that God who began a good work within you will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns”

Your friend, *Comfort*

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## Rising Hope

Over the past year when we have all been struggling to cope with the effects of the Pandemic, we have all needed hope and encouragement to live our lives to the best of our ability. I have been concerned with the effect of the Pandemic on family life and, particularly, for those families who have to endure the ruthlessness of poverty and the breakdown of family life. However, some months ago, I was introduced to an inspirational Charity, Luminary Bakery, which is really making a difference by using the power of education to transform the lives of disadvantaged women in London.

Luminary Bakery was set up in 2016 to help disadvantaged women in London start a new life through gaining bakery skills. These women might have survived human trafficking, domestic abuse, the criminal justice system, mental health, struggles with addiction or leaving care. The common factor is that they have all lived through poverty and yet Luminary Bakery takes great care to ensure that these women are not labelled “vulnerable” with all the connotations of weakness of character that can go with this word but instead the word “disadvantaged” is used. Everyone who has joined the Luminary Bakery training scheme has lived through harrowing times and were struggling to get by each day, questioning their value and unable to provide a different future for their children and yet they were survivors – these women had potential.

Alice Walker, the founder of Luminary Bakery was working through her church for a local charity, Door Of Hope, taking out necessary supplies to women working in the red-light district. Alice was talking to one of the women who looked cold and fed up, when she asked her if there was anything else she could do to earn a living. The woman replied “I don’t know how to do anything else, I’ve been doing this since I was thirteen”.

Alice was determined to make a difference to these women's lives and with the help of a small team from a local church (Kahaila on Brick Lane) decided to set about training the women they met to give them baking skills. Initially, it was just a small number of women who joined the course from the homeless hostel. Some of the women were great cooks, others had never tried baking before but they all wanted to do something creative and the opportunity to do something for themselves. And hope began to rise. Soon they were given space in the kitchen of another church to bake products to sell at Kahaila Cafe and they took samples to other local companies, Gradually the business began to grow and they were able to forge strong partnerships with organisations who support women with traumatic life experiences.

Luminary Bakery found its own home in 2016 on Allen Road in Stoke Newington. As well as the thriving bakery there are now two cafes one at Stoke Newington and one in Camden. Luminary provides a safe and professional environment, empowering women to build their careers through first the initial six month full time programme followed by the opportunity to do work experience through Luminary's cafes and bakery production units which covers a further eighteen months. Throughout the programme there is support from professional mentors and a great deal of holistic support. At the end of the training there is the opportunity to apply for paid work at Luminary or external work. Over the last few years, Luminary has gone from strength to strength, and has trained over one hundred women, tackling huge orders and even making cakes for the Duchess of Sussex.

Luminary produced an outstanding cookery book in 2020, aptly named "Rising Hope". I don't think I have ever read such an uplifting cookery book, which is bursting with hope, vibrancy and joy. This book is beautifully presented and as well as containing delectable, original recipes of cakes and special breads, it also contains the poignant back stories of the women who have turned their lives around by joining the community of Luminary Bakery. Very recently as a result of a BBC radio interview about their cookery book "Rising Hope", the charity was offered a very substantial grant, which will enable them to provide four more apprenticeships. In addition they have just



won an award for the best independent business in Camden. During the Pandemic the bakery has been able to operate at full strength and, although, one of the shops is temporarily closed the other is able to offer a takeaway service and even local deliveries by bicycle.

I hope that many more people may be inspired by Alice Walker's vision of Luminary which has developed from the seed of an idea to the thriving multi site bakery it is today, with the dream of there being a Luminary Bakery wherever it is needed in the UK.

*Heather Wooddin*

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## A Busy MU Branch

A snapshot of what the Mothers' Union at Christ Church, Gipsy Hill, has recently been doing.

### **Wreath Making**

As we were not able to have our annual, "all church and friends", wreath making event at Christ Church due to the Tier 4 Lock Down, I invited all the neighbours on the street where we live to a Wreath Making session and demonstration. I added that the cost would be that of the plain wreath and that a donation to the Mothers' Union would be welcome. In all, some 11 households responded, rather excitedly with comments like, "I have always wanted to make my own wreath!".



Donna Hanson, an MU member, was able to get plain green wreaths on a moss ring from the local florist and we were able to provide odds and ends collected over the years (pine cones, artificial berries, sprayed clematis heads, ribbon, etc.) as well as greenery. Setting up a portable long table on our front garden and bringing

out the wreaths and bits and pieces, I proceeded with the demonstration. Participants came in small groups and started to assemble their wreaths then and there, so I brought out some children's chairs and a tarpaulin



around which they gathered in the open air and with social distancing (sort of). The good will and fun chatting was very lovely. Some rather generous donations were made to the Mothers' Union and all learned a little about the MU, particularly as some donations went directly to Central Office through the website. Through the generous donations of some MU members and of the residents, we raised over £600.

## ***Tags for Food Bank Parcels***

For several years running, we have all met up to write out tags to attach to Food Bank parcels for Christmas. This past year, all five of us (MU members at CC) met to write the tags with the verse:

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him."*  
Romans 15:13

## ***Twiddle Muffs***

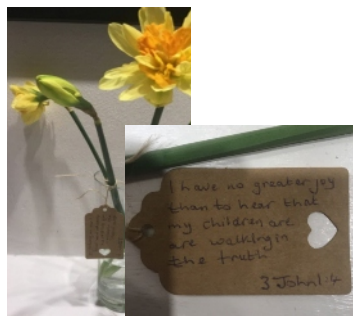
Trena Dickenson, one of our members, is a very skilled knitter. With some tips received from Norma McKnight and Ann Squirrell (St. Mark's South Norwood) about who might need "knitted items" and information re appropriate kinds of wool for different projects, it was decided that "twiddle muffs" for use by people who have dementia would be the most useful item for Trena to knit. She proceeded with the task and knitted five lovely twiddle muffs to be given to St. Christopher's Hospice.



*Trena with her Twiddle Muffs*



*Writing Foodbank Christmas Cards*



*Mothering Sunday Doorstep Posies*

***Jodie Lomax***

# Inspired by the work of Mothers' Union?

## There will be vacancies on the Board of Trustees in 2022

*Mothers' Union is the Heart and Love of the Church.  
(The Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury)*

I am sure you, like me, believe Mothers' Union is one of the most significant charitable arms of our Church, supported as it is by our grassroots membership. Together we have the opportunity to impact on the lives of families, women's and children's rights both in England and worldwide through prayer and action.

However, to bring our mission to life we need you to help us. With over 60 branches in our diocese, it is important that we, as trustees, connect with each and every one. This is important so we can help support the work of members and encourage a widening of MU knowledge to all churches in the Diocese, sharing what MU has to offer families and those in need of particular support.

During this year, elections will be held for officers to be in place at the beginning of 2022. We are currently looking for a number of new leaders as many currently in a role have completed their term of office. The particular roles include:

**Reigate** Vice President (Sutton, Reigate, Tandridge deaneries)

Reigate area rep – 1 vacancy

**Woolwich** Vice President (Southwark and Newington, Bermondsey and Camberwell, Lewisham and Greenwich deaneries)

Woolwich area rep - 2 vacancies

**Croydon** area rep – 1 vacancy

**Kingston** area rep – 1 vacancy

**Fundraising and Communications** unit co-ordinator

**Action and Outreach** unit co-ordinator

If you like communicating, have ideas about how we could work better and build our membership, we need to hear from you. For more information for yourself or someone you think would be good in the role, please get in touch with Anne our secretary or Comfort our Diocesan President at: [mu@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:mu@southwark.anglican.org).

*"I'm a Mothers' Union member and a trustee because it's a strong membership organisation with a great mission and it's been a fascinating role learning more about what we do and how we can make a difference"  
Jenny Kempself (Reigate Area Representative)*



# Praying with Purpose

A variety of resources to encourage groups and individuals to support in prayer the practical aspects of Mothers' Union's mission.

The aim of Praying with Purpose is to help build our faith for prayer, and make it as accessible as possible for a wide variety of people. It provides tools both for groups and individuals at home as we come to pray for each other, for projects and for initiatives. As we do this we live out our aim to base everything we do as Mothers' Union on a foundation of prayer.

Praying with Purpose consists of a number of resources from which can be selected prayer ideas to put together a “bespoke” prayer time for a particular need. At the heart of the resources are templates for prayer times into which chosen ideas can be incorporated. These follow a pattern, which starts by building faith, giving thanks for answered prayer, intercession for current needs and ends with blessing. The emphasis is on variety in praying so that all who participate can feel both comfortable and inspired to pray!

As groups and individuals experience answers to prayer and grow in confidence then it is hoped that they will feel free to adapt the resources provided and to use their own prayer ideas. Praying with Purpose is intended to be a “living” resource; growing and changing as new ideas from those who use it are included.

***Take a look at the [New MU Website](#) where this article is taken from. There are lists of topics to help you and lots of useful information.***

The Diocesan Website has been upgraded – we can now be found here: <https://southwark.anglican.org/mission-ministry/faith-in-action/mothers-union/> – please update your records.

As you will see we have moved to ‘Faith in Action’ which is an appropriate position for our work in the community. The website is much easier to use – more colourful and welcoming. It is, however, still a work in progress – some documents have yet to be linked.

# An Annual Event

Our Annual January Gift Service at St Mildred's, was only available this year as a stream and since so many people see making donations to the Women's Refuge as part of their Christmas giving, we directed everyone we could think of to bring their offerings to my porch.

Everything was quarantined in our conservatory for several days prior to sorting and packing. So much came that it became impossible to move in there! We received well over 500 items of toiletries, new clothing, quality books, toys and miscellaneous items.

A morning was spent preparing it for delivery to the Refuge.



Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously.

*Margaret Simmons*

## Breaking News!

From next year there will be the option to pay for your MU subscription by Direct Debit

# Metamorphosis

We are committed to working with and through the Church in Local mission and community engagement. Metamorphosis offers the opportunity for creative, community led, prayerful engagement

***“Metamorphosis is about building the confidence in the local congregation to listen to what people are saying their needs are and working with them to address those needs and turn their lives around”***  
*The Right Reverend Andrew Proud*

Metamorphosis is Mothers' Union's approach to enabling and supporting meaningful relationships with God. Through these dialogues we have been inspiring transformation in individuals, churches and communities across 10 countries for over a decade. You can find out more about this by visiting our Church & Community Mobilisation page (<http://www.mothersunion.org/projects/church-and-community-mobilisation>)

Within the UK & Ireland, our Metamorphosis approach combines different tools, techniques and suggestions to enable and equip churches to identify the skills, experience and gifts within the church that can be used to transform their communities from the inside out, help others and identify strengths within the community that can be built upon.

We achieve this through creative exercises and engaging bible-based workshops that can involve all members of the community and allow churches to put their learning into practice. As a result, churches can expect to see transformation in their communities through taking action, building skills and developing relationships. Experience has also shown that faith in God and confidence also grow.

*"I have been impressed by metamorphosis, the way in which it has drawn in and energised people from churches that are not structured around regular discussion or bible study groups. The commitment and excitement in the room has been tangible. It has opened up the scriptures in new ways, and played an important part in developing outward-focused churches with a fresh desire to engage with their local communities."*

Revd. Canon Mike Booker, Bishop's Change Officer for Market Towns

The Metamorphosis process has enabled the Church and MU to build confidence and faith and engage with communities, bringing hope.

# 100 Years of The Indoor Members' Prayer Circle

Mothers' Union has always been concerned with supporting people who through no fault of their own are less able to be involved with society than the average person. This year marks 100 years since the establishment of the Indoor Members' Prayer Circle.

The Indoor Members' Prayer Circle was started in 1921 by Mrs. Edith Lucy Mosse, originally for any member who, for any reason, was prevented from taking part in the activities of their local branch but wanted to support and pray for the leaders and the work of the organisation. Originally it was known as the Invalid Members' Prayer Circle and Edith was its first Central Correspondent.



By the 1960's there was a growing dislike of the word 'Invalid' in the title. As medical treatment had improved fewer people were confined to bed but there were still many who were housebound, so in 1971 the title was changed to the Indoor Members' Prayer Circle. Its purpose was '*to comfort the members and enable them to comfort others and also to pray for the work of the Mothers' Union and to support its leaders*'.

Southwell and Nottingham IMPC Rep, Sheila Allton outlines the history of this aspect of the movement. [Read all about this fascinating strand of Mothers' Union.](#)

For a more detailed history go to the Mothers' Union website: (<http://www.mothersunion.org/projects/>)

## *The Indoor Members' Prayer*

*Loving Heavenly Father, Lord of the world, you know the secret thoughts of every heart and hear the prayers of all. You have chosen us to work for you and be as one in prayer. Guide us in our prayerful task and strengthen us to do your will. Uphold us in our weakness and our doubt that those for whom we intercede may truly come to know your healing peace and love. We ask in Jesus' name, your only Son, our Lord. Amen.*

# Anna Chaplaincy for older people

Anna Chaplaincy for older people started from the grassroots and has spread rapidly through being a practical response to need – we talked about looking for ‘the indignant woman/man’ and harnessing such energy - in a similar way to Mary Sumner’s motivation and modus operandi.

I first saw a job advert for a chaplain for older people in Alton and my initial thought was ‘that’s exactly what my parents could have done with’ and secondly, ‘why aren’t they everywhere?’. Our vision is to have an **Anna Chaplain based in every small to medium sized community in the UK**. We seek to raise the standards of professional good practice in ministry among older people generally.

Since 2010, when I began working in Alton, and later 2014 when I joined The Bible Reading Fellowship, BRF, we now have more than 160 Anna Chaplains and others in equivalent community-based roles across Britain. We have dozens more Anna Friends working with them as volunteers (i.e. volunteers working with chaplains a few hours a week).

I have been particularly struck by the Pope’s phrase “the abandoned elderly” in his recent book, “Let Us Dream” by which he means, especially, those who have tended to be invisible in care homes and, even pre-pandemic, were scarcely being visited. Anecdotally we have heard of care homes where fewer than ten percent of residents receive a regular visitor (‘regular’ meaning once a week or more).

We respond to churches and individuals getting in touch with us to ask how they can get Anna Chaplaincy off the ground in their area or pursue their own vocation to such ministry.

In 2017 a key article in *Families First* had been publicising the work and spurring some women to come forward and become Anna Chaplains. It would be great if we could reach out to your membership again, through an article or other means, to identify others who feel a calling to this ministry.

MU ladies already run Messy Church in many places, as you say. *Messy Vintage* is variety of *Messy Church* aimed particularly at older people and is being run in church halls, or via teams going into care homes, and even in a secure mental health unit. BRF has just published a new:

*Messy Vintage – 52 sessions to share Christ-centred fun and fellowship with the older generation, (BRF, 2020)*

<https://www.brfonline.org.uk/collections/new-titles/products/messy-vintage-52-sessions-to-share-christ-centred-fun-and-fellowship-with-the-older-generation>

*Extracts from email from Debbie Thrower*

## Two pleas from Croydon Refugee Centre

Croydon Refugee Day Centre are in **urgent need of large suitcases** for families being moved on from initial accommodation.

Please spread the word to friends and your churches.

They can be dropped off at

The Day Centre (West Croydon Baptist Church) on Mondays from 10-12.

Thank you.

Croydon Refugee Day Centre are also looking for

**unwanted sewing machines** - any type, as long as they work.

If you, or anyone else in your church, has one they no longer need it would be much appreciated and well used by our families.

Please let us know if you can help. Thank you.

*More info on both appeals from [www.linda.stmatthews@gmail.com](mailto:www.linda.stmatthews@gmail.com)*

## Southwark Monthly MU Prayers

*MU Midday Prayers are not being held in the Harvard Chapel Southwark Cathedral at the moment. But on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month, prayers will be distributed to Branches to follow in their own particular way.*



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## Lockdowns, Retreats and Lent

You may wonder how these three are related but through them runs a common thread. As a Retreat organiser, I and many others, were disappointed at not being able to meet for the annual Diocesan Retreat at Wychcroft last October. Such a time normally enables us all to be in quiet rest and solitude with God, in fact, retreating from the noise and many distractions of normal everyday life. Retreats enable us to enter into a place of spiritual refreshing and renewing, a way of entering into the presence of God and allowing Him to nourish our souls.

For nearly a year, during the various degrees of lockdown, we have retreated to our homes, not being allowed to lead our normal busy lives. However, it has given us all the opportunity to re-assess ourselves, time to think and time to pray for an end to the pandemic. Back at the beginning of the first lockdown in March last year, the traffic noise was hushed, the



bird songs could be clearly heard and the fine weather and the appearance of spring brought us joy and hope. What has kept us going through difficult times since? When this is all over, we will realise three things-how much we have, how little we need and how important relationships are. During the past year, we have seen, read and heard about so many examples of God at work, of the kindness of strangers, of community spirit, of generosity and of the remarkable ways in which individuals, families, churches and organisations have adapted to the many challenges. In this Diocese, we have met, through the wonderful technology available, many members of the Mothers' Union. In this way we have kept in touch with each other and got to know a few more faces!

We are now in the season of Lent, and, as Christians, we are on a journey to observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self denial and spiritual discipline as we set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ, to consider his suffering and his sacrifice. This can be seen as another form of retreat when we re-evaluate ourselves and turn away from the luxuries and distractions of daily life. The word Lent comes from the Teutonic (Germanic) word for springtime, and the season can be viewed as a spiritual spring cleaning. Some people fast, eat frugally or give up treats, for example chocolates and alcohol, but it can also be seen as an opportunity to take up new activities such as reading the Bible regularly, praying more intensely and taking on acts of kindness to the needy.

As we slowly come out of this dreadful pandemic, may we look forward with hope and joy to the glory of Easter.

**Margaret Fitch**

## **A Prayer for Lent**

*Holy God*

*Our lives are laid open before you:*

*Rescue us from the chaos of sin*

*And through the death of your Son*

*Bring us healing and make us whole*

*In Jesus Christ our Lord*

*Amen*

*(from the Church of England website)*

