

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families



Southwark News

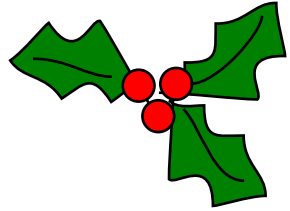
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Forthcoming Events in 2022

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| Wed 9 March | Diocesan Council at Trinity House |
| Fri 25 March | Lady Day Service at St. Alban's, South Norwood |
| Sat 7 May | Festival Service at Southwark Cathedral |
| Wed 6 July | AGM, at Trinity House |
| Sat 15 Oct | Diocesan Council, at St. Mildred's, Addiscombe |

Letter from Our President

Dear Friends,

Greetings and welcome to our final edition for 2021. We are truly grateful for all that we have received this year and we can truly say Ebenezer- Hitherto has the Lord led us.

At the Mary Sumner's Quiet day retreat for our celebration of 100 years since Mary Sumner died, and 145 years since the founding of Mothers' Union in August, we had the opportunity to reflect on 'Looking back and looking forward. Yes looking back at, not just good health, bills paid, freedom but also looking back at opportunities missed, doors that remained locked after much prayers, unexpected news of illness and death and many disasters that left us feeling sad. Yet in all of these, giving thanks for everything because our faith teaches and compels us to know that God is with us in our situations no matter how bad.

I ask us as individuals, Deanery leader, Vice President, Branch Leader, Coordinators or as a Diocese, let us look back with gratitude for how He has led us through our activities. Our Festival service was indeed a very joyful service especially meeting together after a long time. We have had retreats, participated in programmes like Metamorphosis and various activities which took place in our branches. As you look back at your MU activities, what do you need to change? What is slowing you down and making members lethargic?

Looking forward to 2022, what are your plans? We are always eager to make plans hoping all will go well. Let us make our plans focusing on our theme TRANSFORMATION – NOW!

Let me remind us of what our 2022 theme means as stated in our magazine 'Connected'

- *Transform ourselves personally and spiritually to live out our Faith.*
- *Transform the churches and communities we work with and of which we are a part to reflect Christ's Kingdom.*
- *Transform Mothers' Union to be relevant for 21st century life.*

During the Festival service, I spoke about Fear, many are so afraid that we are not able to live again. Those who remain afraid cannot transform themselves, their churches and communities neither can we be those able to transform the MU to be relevant for now. Having built up Hope



and Confidence with our last themes, we need to be people who can go out confidently to transform ourselves and others. This we cannot do on our own but must rely on the Lord to help us.

Our Strategic plan begins in the New Year, we have made every effort to reach every group so that everyone will be aware of

how to plan their programme and also join in all the various activities in the Diocese. All Branch Leaders and committees, please make every endeavour to transform your branch. I want to thank Susan Gibbin and all the Strategy Team for their hard work. I would also like to encourage all to visit the MU website for all kinds of resources which can help guide your meetings and give you information.

I must thank all my hard working Trustees, Coordinators, Branch Leaders etc, those who are remaining and those staying on or coming on board newly. Thanks to all our members through the Diocese for all your cooperation and so many of you joining our zoom meetings. I'm looking forward to many coming back to in person meetings as we begin a new year in 2022.

Finally, may I encourage you all with these words...

“So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” Isaiah 41:10

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Stay Blessed.

Your friend and Sister,

Comfort

*Pictured above:
Comfort at this year's Festival Service*

A Busy Summer Fundraising

On 15th July 2021 St Barnabas, Sutton MU held a Bring & Buy and Coffee Morning in aid of "Away From It All" Holidays in the garden of one of its members, Shirley Tillman. We were blessed with dry weather and £158-60 was raised.

Sally Steele, Croydon Vice President, was there and told us about AFIA during lockdown in 2020. We heard that the cost of the caravan holidays in 2021 have gone up from £800 to £1,400 per week and, therefore, AFIA will need more funds to keep this important work running. She also told us about items needed for the Sutton Women's Refuge.



It was lovely having a chance for a real good chat together. One of our members attending had not seen anyone apart from a few doorstep visitors for 16 months.

During August we raised money to enable women throughout the world to attend savings group workshops for one week. £27 provides accommodation for the week.



August also marked 100 years since the death of Mary Sumner, our founder and 145 years of the Mothers' Union. To help raise funds for the Summer of Hope cause, on Saturday 31st July, some branch members went on a two mile stroll and nature trail around Oaks Park, through the formal gardens, meadow

lands and woodlands. Instead of getting sponsors most walkers just made a donation into their Summer of Hope Blessings Jar. They all enjoyed refreshments afterwards in the Café.

On 10th August the branch held a Cream Tea which raised £150.10. The afternoon began with a short service devised by Esther Foss, the Southwark Diocesan MU Chaplain. It began with words from the Worldwide President, Sheran Harper who said:- "I looked at a huge portrait of Mary Sumner and I asked myself what is it about this incredibly strong lady that inspires me? After thinking for a long time, I came to the conclusion that it is her humility and her determination to do what's right. Despite the challenges and norms of her times, it's her ability to mobilize women of all social classes to unite and transform the home lives of their families by supporting each other in the upbringing of their children. And ultimately, we know this will transform the communities in which they live.

You know it's her quiet confident smile and her selfless acts of love and courage that really inspire me." The theme of the service was the story of Martha and Mary with readings, a poem and a colouring. Two hymns were sung and we heard the anthem sung by St Mildred's, Addiscombe Ladies' Choir written to the words of Mary Sumner's personal prayer. Afterwards there was a biscuit quiz, a delicious cream tea and a raffle.



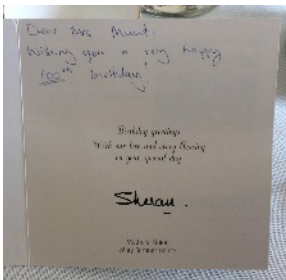
On 31st August the branch held their Wave of Prayer in the church. Members brought their Summer of Hope blessings jars and £234.76 was collected.

God of Hope shine your rays of blessing on women in all kind of leadership roles that this may be a summer of hope for those you call to serve your world. Help us to be a beacon of hope as we follow in the footsteps of others that our vision and mission may flourish in the warmth of your love. Amen

Janice Clarke

Margaret is 100 !

Margaret Munt was born in Fulham on July 4th 1921 and at the age of 3 she moved to East Sheen and has lived there ever since. She went to the local primary school and then the County school in Hertford Avenue, leaving at 16 to work for the Phoenix Insurance Company. When war broke out she joined the Women's Auxiliary Service and served in many places around the country, and was proud to receive the Defence Medal. She married Eric in 1948 at Christ Church East Sheen and they had two sons and one daughter.



She joined the Mothers' Union in 1960, in those days you had to be married and a mother ! She has received her certificate for 60 years service to the Mothers' Union. On her birthday, a glorious summers day, her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren arranged a party at her home and many friends and church members came to visit her. We took our MU banner and she was overwhelmed to receive a card from the Queen

and Sheran Harper, our Worldwide President. The photograph shows Margaret with some members and her special cards. She is truly a wonderful lady !

Wendy Moss
Kingston Area Vice President

Southwark Monthly MU Prayers

MU Midday Prayers are now being held in the Harvard Chapel, Southwark Cathedral on the 4th Wednesday of the month (not December), 11.45am -12.15pm. However, the prayers continue to be distributed to branches beforehand for their own use.



A visitor from Canterbury MU

Rita Pengelly, one of the trustees from Canterbury Diocese did a sponsored walk over several days from her home town of Margate to Southwark Cathedral and arrived at the Cathedral by the Millennium Courtyard on Thursday, 2nd September. She was raising money for Canterbury MU's Away From It All fund. Rita was met by Mary O'Neill and Heather Smith from the Cathedral with St Hugh's MU branch plus MU Diocesan Secretary, Anne Love and MU Diocesan President, Comfort Fearon.

A little later in the Cathedral itself, the Dean, the Very Revd Andrew Nunn, officially welcomed Rita to the Cathedral and he was accompanied by Bishop Christopher. Prayers were said at the top of the Nave, and Rita, kneeling, received a Blessing from Bishop Christopher.

The Dean showed Rita some very old stonework very close to the Sacristy and explained how improvements are planned to make this stonework more visible to the public. The Refectory was closed at the time so Rita and her husband were taken to the nearby Caffè Nero where they enjoyed some hospitality before their journey back to Margate – by car! Rita said that she plans to have a longer visit to Southwark Cathedral in due course.



Pictured Left to right are, Mary, Anne, Bishop Christopher, Rita Pengelly, the Dean, Comfort and Heather.

Anne Love

Bags of Love

As a new venture in outreach, Horley branch have begun 'Bags of Love' support for Mums (or Carers), taking children to playgroup for the first time. Our first plan had been to link with the local CofE Primary School and discovered the PTA Group already does this. We turned our attention instead to the playgroups operating in two of our churches in the Team Ministry.

Before the new term began, 43 were supplied and others will be given as required during the year as new children join. We heard from one group leader that 'they are lovely' and she also shared 'Well one of our new mums who has just had another baby burst into tears as she thought it was such a lovely idea and very thoughtful – it made her day. So far, our other parents are all very surprised and grateful!'



These were funded by monies held over for the purpose from last year's Mothers' Union in action. Reaching out to our community with a gift of love, as well as the pack of tissues and edible treats, we included a prayer for the adults along with a scripture verse and prayer card for the child and our new Diocesan Leaflet.

Penny Lohead

Croydon Deanery Meeting

On a beautiful sunny afternoon on 23rd July, members of Croydon Central & North plus Addington Deanery were finally able to meet for a relatively informal gathering in Anne Kidman's lovely garden. We had given up on trying to have a 'proper' indoor meeting, as restrictions were still pretty tricky - our last official meeting had been in October 2019! We actually covered all the necessary deanery business, with much catching up of news as to how everyone had been coping in their branches during the various periods of lockdown.

As Comfort's letter of encouragement re looking ahead and reassessing how we envisage the MU in the future had just arrived, this was read out and we launched into a question and answer session on this topic, as requested, striking while the iron was hot! Anne then treated us to very welcome hot tea and luscious cakes, the sun having disappeared and a chill wind blowing round us! Spirits were high, however, as we planned the next 'proper' meeting, our AGM for October, which indeed has just taken place at Val Green's church, St Alban's, South Norwood. We have now planned ahead for events into next spring, so, God willing, these will take place - we just have to have continuing faith, hope and confidence!

Thank you to Ann Squirrel and Margaret Simmons for keeping the admin wheels moving efficiently, with their respective roles of Secretary and

Treasurer. Thank you especially to Anne Kidman for her generous invitation to her garden! See pictures below. We are encouraging anyone who has become a Diocesan member, since their branch has closed, to keep in



touch and join us whenever they can or join in meetings or activities at their nearest branch.



Penny Locke, Deanery Leader

St Augustine's Grove Park 135th Anniversary 101 Years of our Mothers' Union Branch

Our anniversary celebration had been cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid restrictions. We set a date for October when Bishop Christopher was able to attend. We had a celebration Eucharist and afterwards partook of cake and wine



for the occasion. Two of our Mothers' Union members made and iced the cake. We had a small exhibition of our archive material including scrap books from recent years and our historic links with an Australian Diocese. We displayed old cups and

saucers with the MU logo and a monogrammed kettle which must have made numerous cups of tea over the decades. There were several pictures of members throughout the years.

Jennifer Davis

No More 1 in 3

On 27th November, as part of our annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence and our No More 1 in 3 Campaign, members of Horley Parish MU, gathered in the Town Centre in freezing cold and rain, handing out



over 120 leaflets. At 1pm they stood together for a short act of worship, followed by 3 minutes silence for Global Day.

Penny Lohead

Join the Speaker Team

Do you enjoy meeting other members and visiting their branches?

Do you have an interest or passion that you could share with others?

If you answered 'Yes' to these questions then you could become part of our Speaker Team.

The subjects that our current speakers share vary from Mothers' Union topics; to Christian reflections; to topical issues such as modern slavery; and to items of general interest.

The theme for 2022 'Transformation – Now!' could be a good starting point for a talk.

You can specify days and times you are available and how far you are willing to travel.

All expenses will be paid by the branches.

If you are interested and would like more details please contact Joy Morrall on joymorrall@btinternet.com



Cathedral Prayers in the Garden

On August 25th Kingston Deanery members were invited to hold a garden party in Sue Betts's beautiful garden, the weather was glorious and it was such a pleasure to meet up again after almost two years. Every branch in the Deanery was represented and each branch bought cakes and scones, there was plenty to eat and Sue's branch members waited on us with teas.

It was the fourth Wednesday so we decided to say the Cathedral prayers provided by Reigate in the garden, this was surely a first! We sat in a very large circle as best we could and everyone joined in.



We also had a bring and buy and raffle which raised £238 for AFIA.



Wendy Moss

Supporting Branches

Are you enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the Mothers' Union?

Can you communicate effectively in person and on-line?

If so, why not become part of our Training Team?

We are looking for one or more members to arrange training for Branch and Deanery Officers, such as training days, workshops or one-off events for Leaders, Secretaries and Treasurers, to share experiences and ideas, and improve skills.

This could be carried out in person or on-line.

The role would also involve supporting and encouraging speakers.

This/these voluntary role(s) would be supported by the Finance and Administration Unit.

For further information please email Anne Love (mu@southwark.anglican.org) or Joy Morrall (joymorrall@btinternet.com)



From Our Photo Album



Deanery meeting at St Alban's South Norwood



Festival Service at Southwark Cathedral

Looking Forward at the End of the Year

“How wonderful the works of your hands, O Lord!” says the Psalmist and at this time of year the world is certainly a riot of beauty and colour. I am not one of those who subscribe to the “No fruits, no flowers, no birds ...

November” way of Thomas Hood’s thinking, but much more John Keats “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.” We have recently held the services of All Saint’s Day and the Feast of Christ the King. How fitting that we should be surrounded by the glory of God! Yes, we know that the colour will become dimmed, but only because nature will be in a season



of waiting, waiting; we have just entered the season of Advent, waiting for what is to come. Advent to us is the first season of the Church’s year: a season for reflecting on the glory of Christ’s Kingdom here on earth and waiting for a future where we can answer God’s calling for each one of us.

In our thanksgiving for the beauty around us, we know that the earth is no longer the perfect place of God's creation. We are called to right the wrongs that humanity has laid on the earth through selfishness and greed. During Advent, perhaps as MU members in Southwark, we could focus particularly on the last two of the Five Marks of Mission:

4th Mark

To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation

In the evening of 25th November, the first day of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, Southwark MU, together with Ministry and Training at Trinity House, held a free Zoom session on learning how to say NO MORE 1 IN 3.

On Saturday 27th November, Mothers' Union members around the world joined together for a three-minute silence at 1.03pm (linking to the 1 in 3 theme), calling for action on an international scale in all the countries where we live. Members were asked to wear a purple scarf and the No More 1 in 3 badge.

5th Mark

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

We are hearing a lot at the moment about the sustainability of creation and how we can in our own small way help to renew the life of the earth. By listening to the ideas which have come from COP26, let us all consider prayerfully what we can do immediately, and in the longer term, to respond to the challenges and make informed decisions about what we can do in our own lives to renew the life of the earth.

*May God give us eyes
to recognise abuse where it exists.
May God give us a heart
to reach out in compassion.
May God give us courage and resolve
to make a difference wherever we are.
Amen*



How wonderful the works of your hands, O Lord and may we be given the fearlessness to help restore them.

Liz Pullen