

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

DIOCESE OF OXFORD **130TH** ANNIVERSARY YEAR

FOCUS

... on the future



**Includes material for the
Wave of Prayer, 20–22 April**

Spring 2018

Dorchester Abbey, 14th July 2018

We do hope that you are all planning to come to this celebration of 130 years of Mothers' Union in our Diocese.

We will be welcoming people from 12 noon who wish to take part in a Prayer walk around the Abbey (at their own pace). We suggest that people bring their own lunch to eat outside in the grounds or you might care to book lunch at one of the hostelrys in the town. You will need to bring your own chair or picnic rug.

If it is raining, then you can bring your lunch inside the Abbey but please be aware that others will be taking part in the Prayer walk, so please do not engage in too much conversation during that time.

There will be a Service of Thanksgiving at 2pm followed by tea and birthday cake(s).

Car parking has been arranged in the Recreation Ground at the opposite end of the town to the Abbey, so will drivers please drop off their passengers safely and then park their cars in the right place. Coaches may not park in the Recreation Ground and passengers should alight in the bus stop by the Rose Walk to the Abbey. Coaches can either park in a layby further along the road or at the Berinsfield roundabout (where the A4074 meets the A415) where there is a large layby and café.

All banners are very welcome – especially from closed branches as it would be lovely to see as many as possible. If you are bringing a banner, please arrive at the Abbey by 1.15pm so that you can be given instructions about what to do.

We are looking for people to help on the day – whether that be as Stewards, tea makers, waitresses and also choir members. Please contact the office before the end of May if you are able to help in any way.

In the meantime, please pray for a fine day!

Dear Friends

I am sure that you are looking forward to a special Celebratory Year. Special events have been planned and I do hope that you will all be able to join in with at least one of them.

By the time you read this, the Spring meetings will be well underway and I hope you have found or will find them thought provoking and feel that your voice will be heard as Mothers' Union prepares for the future.



This is an election year and our thoughts turn to who will fill the roles that our organisation needs to function well. I would ask you all to think seriously about what job you could do to further God's work in the diocese.

I am sure that you would wish to add your thanks to mine to Marion Gunning who has so ably compiled our Wave of Prayer this year: she has such a wonderful talent that she offers us.

Please try to meet with others during these three days in April. As the last day of our special prayer time is a Sunday (22nd April), please can you ask your Church Intercessors to include our Wave of Prayer in their prayers on that day. If they were able to say 'Today we pray for Mothers' Union in our diocese as they share special prayer links with the dioceses of Kinshasa in Democratic Republic of Congo, Victoria Nyanza in Tanzania, Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, Warri and Ahoada in Nigeria and Southwark here in the UK'. Hopefully members of your congregation who don't know about Mothers' Union will come to ask you what that is all about which will give you a great opportunity to share your love of Mothers' Union! Don't assume that someone else will ask, better to ask your Intercessors several times than not at all.

I have another plea: please make sure that your special meeting time for Wave of Prayer during those three days is submitted to the website so that it can be put on our Events page: Diocesan members (like me!) often look to see if they could attend one of your special prayer times during our three days and many are not there! If you haven't done this

already, please do it now! Our webmaster's details are on page 10 or contact the office if you don't have internet access.

Staff from Mary Sumner House and members from around the world attended the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations at the beginning of March. They discussed the challenges and difficulties facing rural women and girls in achieving gender equality throughout the world. Our statement is on the Mother's Union website. As a diocese which is mainly rural, this affects us and our communities.

Finally, please read the article on page 25 about GDPR. This is very important for our organisation.

Happy 130th Birthday!

With love Alison x

From our diocesan chaplain

Dear Friends,

As we begin this new year, we take up the central theme 'In Mary Sumner's Footsteps', to follow Mary Sumner's path, continuing what she began, taking our direction from her as she was guided by God and always listening to God as we are obedient to his call. The destination may be the same but the route and the journey may be very different. With that thought in mind, I offer one of two bible passages that are part of the resources which Mary Sumner House has prepared for us to use this year.



The full set of resources can be accessed at www.themothersunion.org/content/annual-theme-resources-2018. They include prayers and reflections but also activities and even games. Do have a look.

Journeying with God

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For

God said, 'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.' So God led the people around by the desert road towards the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle.

After leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

Exodus 13:17-18, 20-22

As we follow in Mary Sumner's footsteps, the path may not always be easy or straightforward. It may not be what we expect. It may seem that God is taking us by a very circuitous route, but His guidance has a purpose and we may only discern it afterwards when we have arrived and we look back at the journey. Like the Israelites, we see that there were reasons and God has been with us, protecting us for His purposes.

We may not have a pillar of cloud by day nor a pillar of fire by night to guide us, but as we stay faithful to our Mothers' Union commitment - the lifelong commitment we each made at our enrolment - to regular prayer, bible study and worship, by His Holy Spirit, God will inspire and guide us to make wise decisions and to take action to make a difference in our world, whether it be internationally on the world stage or locally within our own communities, churches and families.

May God be with you as you stay true to Mothers' Union throughout this year.

Blessings, Denise

A prayer for this year

Loving Lord, make firm our path as we put our trust in you,
Following in the footsteps of those who have gone before. Amen

The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him.

Psalm 37.23

UNIT NEWS

Action & Outreach

Away From it All (AFIA) holidays for all!

There has been an increasing interest in providing holidays not just for young families but also older people who either have never had a holiday or not had one for over five years. Some folk just cannot afford to take a holiday so we are asking MU members if they know anyone in their branches, churches or local community who would benefit from having a holiday. For older people coach holidays may well be just what they need. Other types of holiday might also be possible. Application forms for AFIA holidays can be downloaded from muoxford.org.uk or can be obtained by contacting our Diocesan Office.

Maureen Weston, Action & Outreach Co-ordinator

Important Announcements from F&A

Firstly, I'm delighted to tell you all that Eve, our membership secretary, is expecting her first baby. Her due date is 12th June and Eve is likely to start her maternity leave towards the end of May. We are so thrilled for her and husband Jon and send our blessings to them both. F&A are starting to plan how we make sure we function well in Eve's absence.

Secondly and on rather a sad note, Peter Teague has had to retire from his position as a member of the F&A Unit. We are so grateful for the many years of experience and hard work that Peter has given to the F&A Unit. We will miss his words of wisdom and guidance. At this crucial time F&A welcome one or two new members. Please prayerfully consider helping us, particularly if you have had previous office experience.

Louise Butler: finance@muoxford.org.uk

If you haven't sent in an article about your branch for our next edition, please do this as soon as possible.

All Saints' Wokingham

Mothers' Union Churches Competition and Calendars

Our Mothers' Union fund-raising project for 2017 came about in two stages. During the summer, the congregation was asked to submit photographs of an 'interesting church', exterior or interior, from anywhere in the world for a competition. In September, the congregation was invited to vote. The clear winner was a colourful photo of the church on the island of Nolsoy in the Faroe Islands.

We then put the 'popular' photos into a calendar and, courtesy of a kind member of the congregation, we were able to print the calendars at cost price. We had good support from All Saints' members and since many of the entries were holiday photos, we were pleased to raise £400 for AFIA.

Pam Creech (Treasurer)



Spring Meetings

If any member is not able to attend one of the Spring meetings and would like to take part in the Mothers' Union process Listens, Observes, Acts, then please contact the office leaving your details and we will try to organise an evening event so that you can take part too. Please let us know before the end of April and we will contact you to arrange a date.

Make May Matter (again!)

For those of you who fundraised last year for our Make May Matter – well done! Now we are going to do it again and hopefully if your branch didn't take part you will consider it. The money raised will go to the Diocese for Away From It All holidays. Send your donations to us at Oxford and you will get a certificate! Make cheques out to Mothers' Union Diocese of Oxford or pay via BACS.

Your fundraising can take part before May (one branch has already raised a lot of money) or even in June, July or August! You could designate a coffee morning to which you invite people who are not Mothers' Union members, you could hold a sale of pre-owned articles, take a basket containing books, candles, jewellery etc. to work or even run a Toddlers outside toddler-in event. In order to spread the word that Mothers' Union exists we need to fundraise outside to other people – take a look at the on-line starter kit which Rosie has designed (she is so full of ideas). Contact the office who will arrange for Rosie to come to you with ideas.

Have you any other ideas? Let me know on 01494 563116.

Do you want a publicity poster about Make May Matter? Just phone or email the office (details on page 10).

Norma Clarke

HOW MANY SMARTIES IN A TUBE?

I didn't know, but our branch members do know a tube holds £11 in 20p coins. I issued them with the challenge for Make May Matter to each fill a tube but decided to do it over the rest of the year. Who knew it would lead to a shortage of these coins in Woodley! However all rose to the challenge and along with the coins collected monthly in our AFIA bucket we have been able to send in £500. It has engendered a lot of fun and laughter along the way with some Smarties eaten before getting home after the handing out.

Margaret Boys Branch Leader



Ideas for projects are all around us

There are many ways to find out if there are things your branch could support in your local area.

Sadly, homelessness is on the increase and there is a real need to provide warm clothes, sleeping bags and toiletries. Do you have a local shelter or drop in café that supports these people? Most areas have a food share or food bank, your branch might like to commit to providing regular items (including toiletries) or give all the ingredients to make a simple recipe.

Does your area have a Family Nurse Partnership that provides support to young parents? They often know young families who would benefit from items for the nursery or clothes, nappies etc for newborn babies.

Increasingly our hospitals are short-staffed, in some areas volunteers go onto wards to help feed those unable to feed themselves. Visiting care homes to support the un-befriended or making fidget mats for people with dementia – the possibilities are endless!

Let's take a good look at the needs of those around us and find new ways to show God's love in our community.

Katy Kerr

Hospital items

We collect items for parents who stay with children at the JR in Oxford. The months that we collect are as follows, but I am happy to collect items at any time of the year.

March/April: South Bucks

May/June: North Bucks

July/August: Oxfordshire

September/October: East Berkshire

November/December: West Berkshire

There is a need for toiletries of all sizes (shower gel, shampoo, soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste); NEW magazines; tea bags and sachets of coffee, hot chocolate and malted drinks; small packets of biscuits (those containing only two or three); cleaning materials; washing powder.

Several premature baby units around the diocese benefit from quilts made by members (details on our website or from the office). A few hospitals accept knitted premature baby clothes but please speak with them first. Members also make up emergency toiletry bags for adults.

Alison Bennett

Contact us

Diocesan Office

Membership secretary: Eve Madeley-Wyatt
Mothers' Union, CMS House, Watlington Road, Oxford OX4 6BZ
01865 787587
membership.secretary@muoxford.org.uk

Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday 10am–3pm. Please continue to use these contact details while Eve is on leave. Office hours will be confirmed.

Office holders

President: Alison Bennett, 01869 343760,
president@muoxford.org.uk

Chaplain: Rev. Lady Denise Brown, denisefbrown@gmail.com

Action and Outreach: Maureen Weston,
07762 015207, maureenpweston@gmail.com

Fundraising and Communications: Norma Clarke
01494 563116, normaclarke99@gmail.com

Faith and Policy: *Please pray for this vacancy to be filled.*

Finance and Administration: Louise Butler,
01235 851011, finance@muoxford.org.uk

IMPC correspondent: Rosie Kilham-Jackson
contact through the diocesan office.

Diocesan Treasurer and MU Enterprises: Please pray for new holders to come forward to take on these important roles.

Focus editor: Ruth Sheppard, focus.editor@muoxford.org.uk

Editorial assistant: Valerie Rushton

Copy by post should be sent to
106 Moreton Road, Buckingham, MK18 1PW

Copy for next issue: 11 May 2018

We try to include all contributions sent, but may have to edit articles to fit. Please keep branch reports to a maximum of 350 words.

Webmaster: Rachel Buckley, webmaster@muoxford.org.uk

WAVE OF PRAYER

20–22 APRIL 2018

linking our dioceses of: OXFORD and SOUTHWARK (England); VICTORIA NYANZA (Tanzania); KINSHASA (Democratic Republic of Congo); AHOADA and WARRI (Nigeria); PORT MORESBY (Papua New Guinea).

IN MARY SUMNER'S FOOTSTEPS

To know our God is to love him. We come into his presence, our hearts and minds tuned to listen to his word and prepared to act on what we hear. We dedicate ourselves to serving him by serving others as we pray.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live.

Amen

[*Mary Sumner*]

Mary Sumner was a woman of deep faith, with a heart for prayer and a determination to make a difference in the lives of others. She listened to God and acted upon his call.

We have **Faith** as our lodestar, guiding us to God. We pray through our Faith we can move mountains in your name.

We have **Prayer** as our wellspring. May we be refreshed by your Holy Spirit and brought daily to a new life in your presence.

We make a **Difference**. We pray we can improve the lives of women and families by leading the way to a more just and equitable society.

We **listen to Christ**. 'We seek not our will but thine, O Lord'.

We act on **God's call**. May we never be afraid to go where you, our Lord take us.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

Read Luke 12: vv. 5-39. How could this be considered a blueprint for Mothers' Union?

CENTRAL AND WORLDWIDE MOTHERS' UNION

Mrs Lynn Tembey, Mrs Bev Jullien, Rt Revd Andrew Proud

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.' [Proverbs]

We pray for the staff at Mary Sumner House, the Central Trustees, all our members and office-holders. We pray too for the current work to transform our governance and to make us ready for the challenges ahead. At the start of our election process we offered ourselves, our skills and hearts in service. We ask for God, who has called us from many nations and peoples, to prosper our endeavours and unite us through prayer, fellowship and devotion to Christ.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

Reflection: God our Father, you knew all about me from my very beginning; you knew all the genes I have inherited and you gave me gifts and talents. You have been sad with me when I have gone through difficult times and you have rejoiced with me in my happy times.

Pause to reflect (in silence if you prefer) and to offer your thoughts to God

Now, you know my potential and my weaknesses, my hopes and my fears. I pray that, through the power of Jesus, you will cleanse and heal those areas in my soul which are damaged and hurting.

Pause to reflect (in silence if you prefer) and to offer your thoughts to God

Then fill me with you Holy Spirit so that I may be able to express love, joy and peace in my being and be able to be a blessing to others. I ask that then I can help to bring your kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven through the mediation of Jesus Christ my Lord.

Pause to reflect (in silence if you prefer) and to offer your thoughts to God.

[MU Bath & Wells Diocese, based on Psalm 139]

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

OUR LINKED DIOCESES

God of Grace Together we turn to you in prayer, for it is you who unites us and sends us out in the name of Christ. Be with us as we work to strengthen our ties across our Link Dioceses. Guide our work of mission and service to others so we can reveal your glory to the world. For you are the one true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who alone empowers us for good.

DIOCESE OF OXFORD (ENGLAND)

Mrs Nikki Sweatman, Mrs Alison Bennett, Revd Lady Denise Brown, Rt Revd Steven Croft.

Oxford Diocesan Prayer 2018

God of mercy and love, be with us we pray. Trusting in you, we build on our past and look forward to our future while marking 130 years of service in your name. We recognise with gratitude the dedication and service of all those members who are no longer with us. May their example continue to inspire us as we share and celebrate together.

We are wayfarers, following roads to the end of the earth, pilgrims on our way to the end of the age.

God our companion, you offer us anew the promised land.

We are travellers on the road to freedom, people of grace with good news for all we meet.

God our redeemer, you offer us anew the promised land.

When the way is uncertain, the shadows dark and dangers threaten we'll not be afraid but take heart.

God our helper, you offer us anew the promised land.

We'll travel lightly, travel together, learn as we go; we are disciples, our mission is love, the journey is long.

God our hope, you offer us anew the promised land. Be with us we pray.

Wave of Prayer 2018

Read Matthew 25: vv. 35-40

We pray for our Diocesan Link Correspondents: Rosemary, Maranda, Alison, Esther, Helen and Gillian. We give grateful thanks for your love that continues to inspire us to active service and thank you for all our members, past and present. Be with us this year and help us to make wise plans that enable us to grow and thrive for many generations to come. May we all be enthused and bring others to join our mission to spread Christ's love. We pray too that everyone will engage in prayers for our elections and that all positions will be filled throughout the diocese.

We look forward to 2018 with renewed hope for our work across the diocese. Strengthen us to fulfil your vision for us and encourage us to reach out into our communities, bringing your hope to those in need. We give thanks for the continued work which members carry out to support families in many diverse ways and for our many new initiatives which are coming on stream. We are grateful that we can still support AFIA, as well as prisoners in Bullingdon and the families and individuals in hospitals across the diocese, especially the John Radcliffe in Oxford.

We pray that the parishes will continue their involvement in developing Stories on the Street and that this will expand. We offer too our hopes that the new Branch link with the Balsam Project in Didcot will make a real difference to local families.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK (ENGLAND)

Mrs Cynthia Smith, Revd Esther Foss, Rt Revd Christopher Chessun.

We in Southwark have much to be thankful for. We have a lively and committed Trustee Board where some members will be stepping down at the end of the year, so we pray for the right people to accept new positions. We continue to thank God and ask his blessing on AFIA (which has helped so many more families to enjoy a break) and our weekly T-at-3 Project in Evelina Children's Hospital (giving tea, cake and a listening

ear for parents). Our branches and deaneries run numerous smaller projects too, all of which will benefit the communities which MU serves. Pray too for our endeavours to Follow in Mary Sumner's Footsteps and our planned meetings to present MU Listening, Observing and Acting, (MULOA), across the Diocese. May our Lord guide and bless us and equip us to serve him for another exciting year.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

DIOCESE OF PORT MORESBY (PAPUA NEW GUINEA)

Mrs Ida Baure, Mother Grace Meakoro, Rt Revd Denny Bray Guka, Most Revd Alan Migi

'So, I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.'

[Luke 11 v9]

We ask you to pray for all we do and for younger members to commit and join our ministry. We thank God for giving us increased confidence and opportunities to take part in many kinds of church and ecumenical worship and discussions. We praise God that we have earned respect in church and MU through studying sharing and upholding the Mothers' Union's 5 Objects and by working together to promote our faith and values. This has meant we can now seek annual donations in church of essential items for the needy and the result is very good. Our desire and prayers are now for the Church to recognise our rights as women to participate fully in Provincial Council meetings.

Every urban member gives to and supports our teaching and help in the outlying area. In 2018, as well as providing training for HIV/AIDS, women's health and education-for-life, we will continue our campaign to gain new members. We will give our support for church families and promote our public campaigning against gender - based violence and women's silence about this. In the community we will continue to pray that the young and unemployed can become law-abiding citizens.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

DIOCESE OF VICTORIA NYANZA (TANZANIA)

Mrs R Jeremiah, Rt Revd Boniface Kwangu, Most Revd Jacob Erasto Chimeledya.

We praise God for everything we accomplish. We ask you to pray for all our concerns as we work to help families in communities across our diocese, seeking unity in all we do. We follow Mary Sumner's footsteps. We teach Christian marriage and living through a cinema film and seminars and help those most needy, including members, with training in running small businesses and in our Dorcas ministry. As our Lord Jesus ministered to the sick, so we continue to support sufferers of HIV/AIDS by prayer and the Word of God as well as by giving them practical gifts and advice and by helping their orphans and children.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

DIOCESE OF KINSHASA (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO)

Madame Naomie Masimango Katanda, Revd Mme Gertrude Mbongo Diela, Madame Marie Tsuna, Madame Marthe Vira, Rt Revd Achille Mutshindu, Most Revd Masimango Katanda

Read Mark 12: vv 30-33

We pray for everyone in our diocese: in the City Province of Kinshasa, the Provinces of Bandundu and Bas-Congo. Broken by insecurity and the ongoing civil war in the East, we still endure extreme hardship, banditry, major sexual violence and serious epidemics. Yet we trust in the power of God to save those whose lives we can touch and we share what we have with those who are desperate. This year please intercede for our training and support for members in Kinzau Mvueté (our new parish) and in Bolobo, and for our vital help for orphans and widows across our diocese. Our ministry to foster Christian marriage and fidelity is part of our calling as we follow MU's Aim and Objects. Despite our difficulties, always we cling firmly to the gift of hope and redemption through service to the Lord.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

DIOCESE OF AHOADA (NIGERIA)

Mrs Edna Ekpeye, Rt Revd Clement Ekpeye, Most Revd Nicholas Okoh

Read Luke 8: vv 1-4

Let us join in prayer for the whole diocese of Ahoada, for stability across the region and for peace to prevail in the face of extreme violence against church members. We ask for the healing power of Christ to bring reconciliation across a torn and devastated society.

May MU members in the diocese always be aware of and follow the same path of Christian goodness as Mary Sumner in working for his Kingdom.

Rejoicing and praising him for all he supplies, they help the poorest and most needy who otherwise cannot survive. This is accomplished by practical training and gifts across the diocese. Christ blessed the children and members remember Christ's exhortation. They use the opportunities created by working with the Anglican Youth Department and the Children's Ministry to educate the youth while seeking to be their Christian role model. They ask our prayers for all they do and for all mothers and families working for Christ Jesus our Lord

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

DIOCESE OF WARRI (NIGERIA)

Mrs Patience Ide, Rt Revd Christian Ezezi Ide

We continue our prayers for Mother's Union in Warri diocese. With Mary Sumner in their hearts they meet to worship our Lord in prayer and praise and learn his scriptures. Through living out our 5 Objects, they express Christ's love as they support families, widows and orphans in desperate need. May their provision of skills training and education ease the poverty of women and girls.

We pray earnestly for peace and reconciliation across all parts of the diocese; for the end of violence towards women and for better care and concern for the effects of HIV/Aids on victims and their families. Mothers'

Wave of Prayer 2018

Union's ministry is to help everyone affected by these scourges. We join in prayers for growth in their numbers, spiritual development and financial means. Though blessed by the Lord, the need is great in the face of so many troubles. Yet still their faith in God's Glory and his power over all, fills all hearts with Joy.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee.

CONCLUSION

God of eternity who makes all things new by your life within us, circle us with your love, fill us with your spirit, strengthen us with your power that we may be bearers of your word as we move ahead inspiring others to walk in your steps and bringing new life to all people.

Hymn: Here I am Lord, © 1981, Daniel L Schutte, New Dawn Music

The Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Grace.

Dates for your diary

Everyone is welcome at area events.

- 4th April Spring meeting: 10.30am, St Catherine's Church Centre, Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5LN.
- 5th April Spring meeting: 2.30pm, Brooklands Centre, Ousebank Street, Newport Pagnell, MK16 8AN.
- 7th April Spring meeting: 10.30am, St Mary's Church Centre, St Mary's Road, Langley, Slough, SL3 7ER.
- 10th April Spring meeting: 10.30am, Memorial Hall, Kiln Lane, Hedgerley SL2 3UU.
- 14th April Spring meeting: 10.30am, St Nicolas' Church, Sutcliffe Avenue, Earley, Reading, RG6 7JN.
- 17th April Spring meeting: 10.30am, Morlais Room, St Michael's Church, Routh Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4JY.
- 24th April Spring meeting: 10.30am, St George's Church Centre, 206 Andover Road, Wash Common, Newbury RG14 6NU.
- 25th April Spring meeting: 10.30am, St James' Parish Centre, Church Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 4LU.
- 10th April Oxford Deanery Quiet evening, St Edburg's Church, Bicester
- 10th May Cathedral Pilgrimage, contact Christine Beynon
- 30th May Diocesan Members' Cathedral Pilgrimage.
- 20th June Oxford Deanery Festival, Bodicote Church, Bodicote.
- 14th July Celebration, Dorchester Abbey, see page 2.
- 17-18th Sept General Meeting.
- 12th October Autumn Meeting and AGM.
- 30th October Cathedral Pilgrimage, contact Jean Vaughan.
- 30th Nov Cathedral Pilgrimage, contact Rachel Buckley.

Find Mothers' Union online

Diocesan website: www.muoxford.org.uk

Provincial website: www.canterburyprovincemu.org.uk

Central MU website: www.mothersunion.org

Facebook: search for 'Mothersunion Oxford'

Woodley Branch News

We have celebrated 70th birthdays for Pat Almond and Julia Beckford. Mary Henson has now been a MU member for 60 years and along with Kathleen Parkinson celebrate 90th birthdays this year. Sheila Mansell now a MU member for 60 years and joins Shirley Pritchard and Enid Roberts celebrating Diamond anniversaries. Joan Hutchings also has notched up 70 years of MU membership. All amazing, however the biggest achievement must be Freda Pemberton, who is our at home member, who will be 103 this year and still maintains an interest in Mothers Union.

We have had a very active year and made over 100 cookies for Reading Uni freshers week, have filled around 80 toiletry bags, welcomed 2 new members and enjoyed an interesting programme. We decided to keep one meeting for just tea and chat as with a large group it's hard to just get to know each other and name badges were suggested and now worn at meetings. They are all very supportive of and another and make me feel proud to be part of them.

Oh, and in the interests of research and accurate reporting I can tell you there are 33 Smarties in a tube and tasted very nice too!

Margaret Boys Branch Leader

LINK DIOCESE NEWS

Have you read the latest *Families Worldwide*? If not, take a look at the updates from our link dioceses:

Nigeria (page 22)

Papua New Guinea)page 54)

Congo (page 52)

Tanzania (page 56)

FOCUS QUESTIONNAIRES

Thank you for your responses, if you haven't replied there's still time!

Abingdon Soup and Ploughman's Lunch

Abingdon Mothers' Union held a Soup and Ploughman's Lunch on Saturday 21 October 2017. This was to raise money to support our new venture, the Balsam Family Project, based in Didcot. We all had a great time with fellow MU members, family members, friends and the general public turning up. There were five delicious homemade soups to choose from with plenty of bread and cheese and fruit on offer. Over 60 people came including some children and everyone mixed in well. Tickets cost £6 and there was also a raffle. The total raised was £418 and we look forward to buying essential items and equipment that Balsam Family Project need to help young parents acquire parenting skills and develop their relationships with their children.

Maureen Weston, A&O Unit Co-ordinator



16 Days of Activism

We decided to hold a meditation day at St Paul's Church in Wokingham to bring the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence to people's attention. Our Assistant Curate, Mother Julie Mintern, was key and she lead prayers at the beginning and then every half hour till 3.0pm. The day was based on "Souls of our Shoes", a Scottish initiative that I saw at the General Meeting in Edinburgh. Donated shoes had short notes such as might have been written by ladies or men who had been subject to violence in a relationship. The display was left in church for the whole 16 days for those who visit the church to see.



Book Review”

***Contented Dementia* by Oliver James**

Many of us know people who are caring for someone with dementia. We realise what a difficult situation they are in where often their love, patience and understanding are severely tested. “Contented Dementia” was recommended to me and I have found it to be a practical guide which has enabled me to understand and encourage others who are facing this particularly demanding time in their lives.

Memory loss is often regarded as a key aspect. The person has a memory of their lives in the past. This is likened to a photo album where the photos are recalled easily from past experiences but are non-existent or fragmented in the present.

Three important commands are given which can immediately transform the situation. The first one is not to ask questions. Questions create stress and frustration and often lead to anger. They are to be avoided. Instead make statements like “Let’s have a cup of tea.” The second is to think about what the person is really passionate about. They may have had an interesting job or hobby which they spent much of their lives being involved with like music, gardening or sport. Make out that they are expert at it and that you are the learner. Use expressions like “Silly me, I really don’t understand” to encourage them to participate in a discussion. The third command is to never disagree! This may mean making comments like “Really”, “Well, I didn’t know that” and then introduce another topic or refer back to their main interest again. All these ideas are explored in detail in the book with many helpful examples.

Living with someone in the family home and then when the person moves to a care home raises different issues which are all explored. The ideas are straightforward but will need to be practised – especially making statements instead of asking questions!

Maureen Weston

Oliver James, *Contented Dementia: A Revolutionary New Way of Treating Dementia – 24-hour Wraparound care for Lifelong Well-being* (2008)

Nominations for Diocesan President Please!

We have just begun the final year of our Triennial and are beginning to plan ahead to form a new Trustee Board for 2019/21. Initially we must find a new President as our current Diocesan President, Alison, will be retiring at the end of this year. We are looking for someone who can help build on the strong foundations which have been laid; a person who can energize the body of the Mothers' Union in this Diocese.

Please prayerfully consider whether you yourself could offer to take on this responsibility or whether someone in your branch or a Diocesan member known to you would be ideally suited. It may be that two people are happy to work together and that the role of President could be a "job share".

Generally a President serves for three years and there is the possibility of standing for re-election for a second term if they wish.

If you would like to suggest a name(s) for this post please complete a nomination form, or write a letter containing the information required, and send it to me by post or email:

Revd Louise Butler, Unit Co-ordinator for Finance and Administration

Email: finance@muoxford.org.uk

Postal address: MU office, CMS House, Watlington Road, Oxford OX4 6BZ

If you wish to understand more about this position, please contact me in the first instance and I will forward your query.

Closing date for nominations is 30 April.

The form can also be downloaded from the website (www.muoxford.org.uk).



Reg charity no: 249723 CMS House Watlington Road Oxford OX4 6BZ www.muoxford.org.uk

TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS for DIOCESAN PRESIDENT 2018: NOMINATION FORM

Name of the person you are nominating:

.....

Their address:

.....

.....

Your name:

.....

Your address

.....

.....

Branch/Diocesan* Member (*please delete as appropriate)

Signature

.....

Date

.....2018

GDPR

What on earth is this about? Another **** Acronym!

Actually it stands for the General Data Protection Regulation which comes into force on 25th May.

What does it mean for me?

The main way that this change in the law will affect Mothers' Union members is that we can no longer hold on to old paper copies of our Directories or Branch lists. So can we please ask you all to look in your cupboards and drawers to find any that you may have had in the past and dispose of them: NOT in the recycling box but to BURN THEM if possible. If you cannot burn them, then please send them to the Diocesan Office as soon as possible so that we can dispose of them for you.

This might sound drastic, but paper copies of personal information are now deemed to be very insecure and if they are lost, then the Trustees will be liable. **There will be severe financial penalties for Mothers' Union if we don't comply**, so please do all you can to help us meet our new obligations.

Please ask anyone you know who may have left the Diocese or ceased their membership to dispose securely of any lists they may have kept too.

Current Office Holders will be contacted with information concerning the records they hold on their branch members as soon as that is available. At the moment, you should retain your current records and dispose of your old lists.

Louise Butler

Plastic-Less Lent

This Lent I decided to try the Plastic-Less Lent challenge, as launched by theologian Ruth Valerio and backed by ChurchCare. The challenge is to use less plastic, particularly single-use plastic. I quickly realised it wasn't an easy or necessarily a straightforward challenge, but even just being aware of how much plastic we handle in a day, and then resolving not to buy coffee in disposable cups, is a good start, and then just as importantly challenge your local cafés and businesses not to hand out single-use plastic when there's an alternative. How about taking a look at what your branch or church to join the challenge? There is an active Facebook group which is full of discussions, take a look.

RS

Celebrations

Pam Hames-Piggott, former leader of St Mary's Datchet, was 80 on 21st November.

Pat Peirson, former leader of St Mary's Datchet, was 95 on 24th November.

Grace Pullinger, Hitcham and Taplow, celebrated her 90th birthday in October.

Pam Smith, Hitcham and Taplow, celebrated her 90th birthday in November.

Barbara and Alan Willson, Hughenden, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on 2nd December.

Prue Wood, Chesham Branch celebrated her 90th Birthday on 7th December.

Joyce and Ken Oliver, Winslow Branch, celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary later this year. This celebration would not have been possible without the anniversary at the end of January of the heart transplant Joyce received 31 years ago. She prays for her donor family regularly. The family of a young Swiss woman gave permission for the heart to be used at what must have been a terrible time for them. Last year we celebrated with Joyce with lovely flowers in the Lady Chapel in memory of her donor. For our Millennium Kneeler project a late MU member had worked a beautiful kneeler for the "Harefield Hamsters" who are transplant survivors from Harefield Hospital where Joyce's operation took place. This is in place where Joyce usually sits in St. Laurence church. Winslow Branch is also very grateful because Joyce has been a long-term member of our committee, resigning only fairly recently. She is happy for this story to be told if it will encourage families to become organ donors so that someone else can also have the new lease of life she herself has enjoyed for so long.



Chesham Soup Lunch

Tuesday 30th January was a cold, but sunny day when Chesham Branch held their annual soup and pudding lunch. Well over 60 people enjoyed the delicious choice of homemade soups and variety of mouth-watering puddings, plus cheese and biscuits, there was certainly plenty for everyone. Our fundraising lunch is always a happy occasion and this year was no exception and the grand sum of £647 was raised for the Literacy and Financial Education Programme. So thank you to all the ladies who worked so hard in making our lunch such a success.



Pam Smith celebrating her 90th birthday.



Grace Pullinger celebrating her 90th birthday.



The Sonning and Bracknell Deanery Quiet Day was held in the hall at St James', Finchampstead, and led by Rev'd Jane Kraft. The altar frontal is so lovely on the movable altar that we wanted it to take pride of place. (Jean Vaughan)



Members from Chesham Branch held an hour's Prayer Vigil on Tuesday 5th December in support of 16 Days Against Gender-Based Violence.