

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families



Southwark News

No 269 Spring/Summer 2025

Contents

Front Cover: *Anne Love and her husband
at Trinity House - Page 8*

Pages

- 3 Letter from our President
- 4 Trustees Board 2025
- 5 Lady Day, Feast of the Annunciation
- 6 Southwark Monthly Prayers
- 7 16 Days of Activism Service
Knitted Hearts for T@2
- 8 Anne Love Retires
- 9 New MU World Wide Leader
- 10 You are The Light of the World
- 11 VE Day event
- 12 Our New MU Patron
Canterbury Provincial Gathering
- 13 St Mildred's Cake Stall
- 14 Celebrating 150 Years of Marriage
MU at Cheam Charter Fair
- 15 Update from our President
- 16 A Reflection



Forthcoming Events - 2025

Sat 31 Aug-Mon 1 Sept.....Wave of Prayer

Sat 6 Sept.....Leaders' Day 10.30-12.30, Trinity House

Sat 27 Sept.....Provincial Gathering, Oxford

Tues 14-Thurs 16 Oct....Diocesan Retreat, Wychcroft

Sat 11 Oct.....Members' Meeting, St Andrew's, Ham

Mon 15 Dec.....Diocesan Advent Service, St Mildred's, Addiscombe

Please send your material for the Autumn Edition by 18 October

Editor: Val@utopia-creative.com

Letter from Our President

Dear Friends,

Jeremiah 29 v 11 says ‘*For I know the plans I have for you,*’ declares the Lord, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*’



That is the Bible verse which has been the basis of my agreeing to take on the role of your Diocesan President. I know God has plans for Mothers' Union in Southwark and these words are affirming and encouraging as we journey together as members of our wonderful world-wide organisation seeking to offer care and support for families. With a new Trustee board and a new theme for the next three years “Join Us, Join In” we continue to grow in confidence to ensure we have continued impact on social justice, building on our connections with church mission in our parishes and across the diocese.

We are looking forward to celebrating the 150th anniversary next year and plans are underway for national events. Together we shall plan our celebrations in Southwark on a diocesan level and in our church communities. God has his plans, we need to discern just what they are and how we fit in. My challenge to us all over the next three years is that we build our members by 150 – that appears a large number but broken down becomes 50 members a year, that is barely one, a branch.

Meanwhile we continue to root all we do in prayer.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 4:6-7

Yours in faith,

Penny

Trustees Board 2025

Penny Lohead
Diocesan President



Ursula Hodges
Kingston VP / Faith and
Policy coordinator



Margaret Fitch
Reigate Area Rep



Yemi Ojumu
Woolwich Area VP - joint



Sue Newman
Croydon Area Rep



Sue Betts
Kingston Area Rep



Jennifer Davis
Woolwich Area VP - joint



Joy Morrall
Croydon Area Rep*



Moir Greenfield
Kingston Area Rep

Roseline Okiti
Woolwich Area Rep



Susan Gibbin
Reigate VP/Fundraising
& Comms Coordinator



Cathy Brown
Reigate Area Rep



Mary O'Neill
Treasurer
Jean Cartwright
Treasurer



Rosemary Walsh
MU Diocesan Secretary



VACANCY - Croydon VP

*Please pray that we are able to fill the
vacant position as a matter of urgency.*

Lady Day -The Feast of the Annunciation

Lady Day - the Feast of the Annunciation, celebrated on 25th March, has been a significant day for Mothers Union since 1897. There are a number of ways in which Mothers' Union relates to the story of the Annunciation: *



Family life— we look to provide Christian care for families worldwide and this includes initiatives to support the role of parents and carers. We deliver parenting programmes and development, policy and faith work that empowers women and men in their parenting and life in general. Our faith in the family emphasis encourages families to experience together the love of Christ; the One whose coming is heralded on Lady Day.

Faith – through our fellowship together and our faith and worship resources we nurture our relationship with God; we cultivate our prayer life and strengthen our willingness to follow our Lord, just as Mary was willing to obey his call.

Vocation and service— the annunciation was about listening and responding to God; the result of which has had consequences for all, in every aspect of life. As Mothers' Union we seek to care for people's physical, social and spiritual needs. At this time, we are particularly seeking to listen to God in order to respond to his plans for our service going forward; as we continue to reach out as Christ's hands across the world.

Vision – Mary's faith and obedience affected all generations throughout the world. The faith and obedience of our founder, Mary Sumner, has led to Mothers' Union sharing the love of God's son, Jesus Christ, for generations throughout the world. We pray that

in our day we too, we will be willing to follow God in obedience and faith, with thanksgiving and praise; and that our souls will always magnify the Lord.

Across the 84 counties where Mothers' Union is represented, Lady Day is celebrated in many and varied ways. Thanksgiving Services are widely held, which often include the enrolment of new members as well as a creative way of celebration, including drama, games and events with families. In the Diocese of Southwark MU members come together each year for a service of prayer and reflection. Please join us in our prayers this day.

*For the faithfulness of your servant Mary, we give you thanks.
For saints of every age who, when called, have simply obeyed
– whether shepherd or scholar, faced by opposition or praise,
asked to give from their riches or poverty –*

We give you thanks. In your eyes all are blessed.

*May we count ourselves among that number, willing to hear our
call. Our lives dedicated in service to our Saviour and King.*

Amen

Susan Gibbin

** Painting, from The Annunciation by Leonardo da Vinci*

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

| | | |
|--------|---|----------|
| 27 Aug | - | Reigate |
| 24 Sep | - | Croydon |
| 22 Oct | - | Woolwich |
| 26 Nov | - | 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

16 Days of Activism Service



In November last year for the MU Croydon Deanery, St Alban's Church South Norwood, held a service for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. Around 25-30 attended. After the service there was a break for refreshments then the MU Deanery AGM was held. Many thanks must go to Fr. Sean Gilbert and the MU team for their hospitality, for making it a very special service and meeting.

Penny Locke

Knitted Hearts for T@2

St Dunstan's Cheam knitting group, make knitted hearts for St Thomas's Palliative care unit. One heart is for the patient and the other for their relative. If you need the pattern, email Rosemary Walsh, Mothers' Union Diocese secretary, at rosemary.walsh@southwark.anglican.org

The completed hearts can be given to any Mothers' Union members who do T@2 or email Hilary Richardson who organizes [T@2](#).



Janice Clarke

Anne Love Retires

An Award for Anne

In January the Bishop of Southwark presented Anne Love with the Lancelot Andrewes Medal for 'Godly Service & Zeal for the Gospel', as she concludes her 34 years as Secretary to the Mothers' Union.



From @BishopSouthwark

Retirement Day



The Diocesan Council Meeting held on 12th March in Trinity House, was Anne Love's last day as Secretary to the Mothers' Union. At this meeting speeches were given, praising Anne for her dedication and hard work over many years. Anne replied. Gifts and a bouquet of flowers were presented to her.



Thank you Anne for all your guidance, kindness and patience. We will miss you.

Happy Retirement

Our New Worldwide President



Our Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow, has been formally commissioned by the Archbishop of York

On 24th March, at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, Kathleen Snow was formally commissioned as Worldwide President of Mothers' Union by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York. The ceremony also included the commissioning of the new Worldwide Board of Trustees, and was an open event which meant the pews were full of MU members from around the globe. *

Archbishop Stephen reflected on the occasion, saying: *"It was a real joy to commission Kathleen Snow as the new Worldwide President of Mothers' Union today. Members across the world are united in their desire to make a difference in daily lives, bringing the hope and love of God in practical ways."*

After 37 years as a member, including the last six years on the Worldwide Board, Kathleen felt called to serve and was elected through a global vote. Speaking at the service, Kathleen shared her motivation to take on this role: "We are stronger together. These words have been on my heart since I felt the calling to stand for Worldwide President. Mothers' Union is more than an organisation—it is a way of life, a family of faith. Through our shared prayer and support, we grow together, answering Christ's call to 'Come, follow me.'"

(Text & wide photo from Mothers' Union Website)



**There were many members from our Southwark MU Branches attending this lovely service.*

YOU are the Light of the World – Burn Brightly

They were the words beginning and ending the inspiring sermon preached by Bishop Rose of Dover at a beautiful Eucharist held in the Western Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral on the 1st April 2025. It was a wonderful way to begin our day as the South-East Cluster came together to embrace our new Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow's Visit. We then had time to wander and ask questions about the Cathedral. We spent time remembering Thomas Becket and were told stories of miracles experienced by pilgrims, all shown in brightly coloured stain glass windows.



Our President Penny Lothead, Susan Gibbin, Hilary Richardson and myself, Cynthia Smith, represented Southwark. Jackie Curd and members of the Canterbury Diocese arranged this special day and looked after us all at St Paul's, a beautiful old church. At St Paul's each Diocese displayed interesting boards depicting photos etc of our works and events. We had time to share and see what the other Dioceses were involved in. We received amazing hospitality throughout the day including a delicious cooked lunch and later, afternoon tea with homemade cakes. In between lunch and tea Kathleen spoke to us, telling us about herself and how the Dean of the Cathedral in which she worshipped, asked her to start an MU branch 37 years ago. Kathleen told us inspiring stories from around the world and said her 'mantra' is 'Stronger Together'. She closed her talk with the words 'Be Joyful and spur each other on'. Kathleen then took and answered many interesting questions and reminded us all of our 150th anniversary next year, encouraging us to start preparing now.

After tea some of us, walked to St. Martin's Church where there was a 'young women' waiting to tell us its history. St Martin's is the oldest parish church in continuous use in the English- Speaking world! Here Augustine, Ethelbert and Bertha prayed as the Cathedral and Abbey projects were planned. Roman brickwork could be seen in the chancel. From the entrance you could see through the houses to the Cathedral.



After, we returned to the Cathedral to join in the service of Evensong, a lovely way to end a great day. We noted that the anthem was about 'The Light'. With the day bathed in sunshine and with our prayers and thanksgiving, may we in the Mothers' Union radiate that light and 'spur each other on' to 'burn brightly' in our communities and beyond.

Cynthia Smith



VE Day Event at St Paul's, Hook

St Paul's MU invited everyone to join in an evening of sharing memories and stories of VE Day 80 years ago. Members showed photos of local

street parties and brought ration books and identity cards. The evening ended with a reading and a prayer of thanksgiving for all who made the ultimate sacrifice for peace.

Ann Fernihough



Our New Patron

As our new patron, Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Edinburgh, is committed to helping strengthen families and communities to deal with issues that impact them.

27 Feb 2025

Mothers' Union has had the privilege of enjoying royal patronage since its foundation in 1876, and we are delighted, as we approach our 150th Anniversary in 2026, that Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Edinburgh, has accepted the invitation to continue this tradition.



MU World Wide President, Kathleen Snow with HRH, The Duchess of Edinburgh



"We are honoured that Her Royal Highness has chosen to join us as patron," says **Mothers' Union Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow.**

"The Duchess will bring strength and inspiration for the work we all do. We are especially grateful for Her Royal Highness's experience and commitment to championing the most marginalised, particularly those who are impacted by violence and abuse in conflict, a cause

we are passionate about, because conflict disproportionately affects women and children. As a woman-led movement, we also greatly welcome The Duchess's commitment to promoting the development of women into leadership."

From The Mothers' Union Website

Canterbury Provincial Gathering

Canterbury Province is holding a gathering for all members on **Saturday, 27th September 2025 at The King's Centre in Oxford.** This is going to be a wonderful opportunity to meet members from across the province, including our new Provincial President, Comfort Fearon. We will also be joined online by our new

Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow. There will be plenty of opportunity to enjoy fellowship and worship together and to have some fun. This event is open to all members and friends.

Venue: The King's Centre,
Thames Hall, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES

Tickets £20 per person are available at:
www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union



St Mildred's MU Cake Stall



We were delighted when, on Mothering Sunday, most of the parish supported our cake stall which we held in aid of AFIA. Support came both by donating goodies for the sale and/or coming to buy.

There was an amazing array of both sweet and savoury items which raised £221.70. This will go towards helping AFIA



provide holidays and breaks for those who otherwise would not be able to access them.

We will never forget the reaction of one of the first adult customers through the door - she stopped in her tracks and said "Wow!", then moved at speed to choose her selection of the goodies.

Margaret Simmons

Celebrating 150 Years of Marriage

It must be very unusual for three couples in one church congregation to be celebrating their Golden Weddings within one year, let alone within seven weeks! Now worshipping at St John the Baptist, Old Malden and in the Mothers' Union branch there:



Liz, Anthony, Monica, Edward, Marilyn and Richard.

Marion Taylor met Richard Burkett at Holy Trinity, Tooting and were married there on 10th August 1974.

Monica Henn met Edward Drake while on holiday in Torremolinos and were married at St Nicholas, Pyrford on 7th September 1974.

Elizabeth Miles met Anthony Pullen in the choir at St Michael & All Angels, Southfields and were married there on 28th September 1974

With thanks to photographer: John Eggitt

Liz Pullen

MU at the Cheam Charter Fair

St Dunstan's Mothers' Union, Cheam, had a cake and preserves stall at the annual Cheam Charter Fair. This is an annual fair in Cheam, dating back to medieval times, held on or near 15th May each year. The committee and members made cakes, biscuits, jams, marmalade and elderflower cordial to be sold. We are delighted to have raised over £400 for MU funds and projects".



Hazel Brown

Update from our President

Dear Friends,

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." – 1 Corinthians 15:58

It has been a very busy year so far. Before we had a chance to meet our new World Wide President, Kathleen Snow, we received the wonderful news that Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh had asked to become our new Royal Patron. So we are set for an exciting future as we invite family and friends to 'Join Us, Join In'. A group of four travelled to Canterbury for a day with Kathleen Snow as she visited our South East Area, sharing worship, lunch, her vision for the future and showcasing our diocesan projects and activities, see Cynthia's full article.

Our Council meeting in March was a busy morning covering the usual updated reporting and spending time in groups looking to the future. A flurry of ideas were put forward for celebrating the 150th anniversary next year and in how to recruit and retain members. A huge thank you to all who contributed suggestions. With my predecessors sharing their memories of working with Anne Love we were able to thank Anne for her enormous, faithful and diligent work as our Secretary for 34 years. Our thanks have been collated into a presentation booklet which was available at the Leaders' Day at the end of April. At that meeting we looked at the suggestions from March Council. There will be more news of this by the end of the year, as at this time more information will be available on a range of national initiatives, as well as our own Diocesan plans. We also agreed to rename these meetings 'Members' Meetings' which we hope will encourage more leaders and members to attend.

Thank you to those branches who have invited me to visit. I am enjoying meeting members in their parishes and finding my way around the Diocese. If you have not yet sent me your programmes please do so or a particular invitation to a specific meeting.

As we look forward to enjoying the summer season and the flourishing of nature, we look forward too to the flourishing of Mothers' Union in Southwark as we work together to serve the Lord in our communities.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." – John 15:5

Yours in faith, *Penny*

A Refection

*I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, give me a light that
I may tread safely into the unknown,
he replied "Put your hand into the hand of God, that will be to you
better than the light and safer than a known way".*

Written by Louise M Haskins.

Every new year, these words give me hope. One can never predict what the future will bring. One's life and circumstances can change in the twinkling of an eye. So we must be prepared to trust in God and our faith will lead us on.

I have a lovely garden, which for London is a blessing, it also brings challenges as one gets older. Just recently I have a gardener to help. In the springtime it all looks very tidy, as he has got on top of weeding and pruning jobs. Despite this there is always something to do. I look at the spring bulbs coming up amongst the frosty earth and am hopeful that spring is on the way.

I feed the birds in winter and mostly pigeons of various types come to feed. A robin visits every morning to pick up the crumbs from my dog Rosie's Bonio. She takes it to the same place without fail. The robin greets me with a cheerful song, and watches until he can come down to grab his crumbs. He is quite tame and doesn't worry about Rosie at all.

I think life would be very sad without birdsong and our pets to raise our spirits, in the cold winter months and throughout the year too!

*Thank you Lord for the seasons of the year
Spring a time to sow
Summer a time to grow
Autumn a time to reap
Winter a time to sleep.
There is a time for everything under heaven.*

Ecclesiastes 3: v 1.



*Jennifer Davis
- Faith & Policy Unit*