birmingham link
news from mothers' union in and around birmingham
Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of Birmingham
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Autumn 2017

Preparing veg!

Holiday Kitchen St. Thomas' Church, Garretts Green

A wonderfully inspiring summer event....

Holiday Kitchen took place over the summer school holidays at St Thomas' church in Garretts Green. The project provided for families with school age children who really miss the provision of school meals and the social interactions of school life during the 6 week summer break. We met on Tuesdays and Thursdays for breakfast, lunch and a range of activities.

Five families joined us, comprising of six adults and 15 children. We raised funds to employ Adam Larkin to plan and deliver the family activities and members of our Mothers' Union looked after the food side of things and a young leader from our youth group was a great help engaging with the children and parents.

Families arrived between 9.00 and 10.00 for breakfast which ranged from simple self-service cereals and toast to cooking sausages and pancakes. There were various activities for the children but everyone engaged in planning and preparing lunch, including a shopping trip and we also looked at budgeting, exercise and nutrition. We visited a local allotment to see how things grow and on two days we made up packed lunches and went out for the day.

There were also crafts, games and fun activities for the children and adults together. We had a taste challenge to see if we could tell the difference between brand leaders and supermarket own products and "the price is right" game. We had baking sessions to make Victoria sponge cakes and gingerbread biscuits which everyone enjoyed eating.

The allotments

A visit to Manor House Leisure Gardens proved very popular - the children really enjoyed seeing vegetables growing, some of the allotment holders gave them a guided tour and they were given enough rhubarb to make rhubarb crumble for the next lunch! This helped the children to appreciate how food gets from the ground to their fork.

We walked to Sheldon Country Park for games, picnic and fishing for sticklebacks - this was to show families they could have a fun day out without expense. A bus trip to Coventry Motor Museum costing £5 per family also showed that it's possible to have a cheap day out. The families were able to tour the Coventry Motor Museum, which is free, then get the bus back. We also took a coach trip to Conkers which was funded by AFIA (Away From It All). Verbal feedback from the families has shown that they enjoyed the sessions immensely and felt it had been of benefit for their family.

The project was made possible with funding from Stechford and Yardley North Local Innovation Fund, Mums in Brum, Yardley Great Trust and Birmingham Airport.

We ran the project as eight sessions over four weeks, plus the trip to Conkers. Alongside this, the church ran ten play days for primary age children, plus five activity days for older young people. Consequently, some of our volunteers worked for eighteen 6 hour days over four weeks. Ideally, to run a project like this, you should have enough volunteers to be able to rotate them. We really appreciated Adam's skills and experience of working with children who can be challenging as all of the families had children who presented challenges that the parents struggled with.

Adults and children had a great time, had new experiences and challenges including trying new foods. We've established good relationships with the families, got to know them and appreciate the daily challenges they face. They have made good friends and hopefully the children have had some great times and self-confidence and self-esteem have grown. We all learned from each other and had some interesting and challenging faith conversations. Hopefully we will have ongoing contact through church and our regular community activities.

Published with the permission of the Revd Susan Larkin and Linda Nugent (Branch Leader) St Thomas' Garretts Green

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Matthew delivering the tug of war rope for the family fun day

A Modern Parable

A reflection by Matthew Rhodes

At our Group Festival service this year we had a challenging drama written by Ann Willis based on the story of the Good Samaritan. It was about a young mum called Jenny whose husband was away with the Army, leaving her to struggle with twins and a new baby. Jenny had been to church and was on the radar of the Mothers' Union but when her car broke down and her mother had a fall the members of the Mothers' Union were too busy to help. So too was the vicar. In desperation, Jenny rang her Muslim neighbour who dropped everything to come to her aid.

Like the parable on which it was based, the drama reminded us that our neighbour is not always the person we would expect. And it seems particularly timely at a time when our Muslim neighbours may be feeling vulnerable and marginalised. As in many other parts of our Diocese, Sutton Coldfield where I live, is becoming more diverse and there is a growing need for dialogue and collaboration between people. My local Muslim association approached some Christian ministers in the town and now we meet regularly to talk about our faiths and increase understanding. Alongside this, a group of Muslim and Christian women, known as the "Sutton Sisters", have also been meeting. This summer they held a wonderful family fun day with rounders, cricket, a tug of war and lots of food.

Many of us are so busy running the church that we sometimes forget to look outwards. We already have so much to do and the outside world can feel a bit daunting - a bit like the road to Jericho. Our world is changing fast and we need to change with it. Just as people in the past bravely broke down barriers between Christian denominations, so we need to break down barriers between faiths. Jesus was always challenging his listeners to expand their vision of God's kingdom and he continues to challenge us today. We don't need to set up a new committee or project or even raise more money. We just need to remember to love our neighbours - all of our neighbours.

Revd Canon Dr Matthew Rhodes, Diocesan Chaplain

Matthew, Hugh, Thelma, The Revd Margaret MacLachlan and Janet enjoying the natural environment

Diocesan Retreat to Holland House

Twelve Mothers' Union members went to Holland House. We arrived in time for lunch, which was followed by a Eucharist led by our chaplain Matthew Rhodes. The chapel is a place of peace, there are large plain glass windows with beautiful views of the trees and gardens; a wonderful place to be at peace with God. We had free time to settle in before tea followed by evening prayer and dinner (lots of lovely food at Holland House!). Eureka then led us in a reflection; all the reflections we had were based on the Lord's Prayer. The evening finished with Compline. The following day was filled with further reflections and a prayer walk with services in the chapel and rest times in between. The prayer walk took us all through the gardens and there was so much to see and also time to be still, this ended with a walk through the Labyrinth. It was only afterwards that we found out that Eureka had asked us to be silent through the Prayer Walk and to come together at the end to discuss what we had gained from it, I think we stopped quite a few times to discuss the beauty of it all and the peace, so apologies must be given to Eureka! Different members led morning and evening prayer. It was a busy time but also a time of refreshment. Thank you to Matthew Rhodes, Eureka Drayton and all those who contributed.

Revd Margaret MacLachlan and Margaret Howlett

The Mothers' Union Office will be closed 14 December 2017 - 1 January 2018 inclusive

From the President

Jackie and Pat Costain, Diocesan President of Sodor and Man in the courtyard of Buckingham Palace

Dear Friends

I have just come back from the General Meeting in Edinburgh, the Theme of which was Peace and Reconciliation. There were many highlights for me and I'm sure we all took something different away from both the service and the meeting itself. Canon Sarah Snyder, the Archbishop of Canterbury's special advisor on reconciliation was the keynote speaker and her talks were rich with personal and biblical teachings. Something which stood out for me was the fact that women are often good at spotting rising tensions in both in families and communities. I think the worldwide Mothers' Union know this and this is why our movement is so important for the support of strong families and communities. The conference venue was spacious enabling people to mill about freely and browse the interesting displays about Mothers' Union initiatives.

Looking forward, our theme for 2018 is 'In the Footsteps of Mary Sumner'. This recognised the importance of the past shaping us as well as the present and the future. Is there someone or some action which has helped you in your Christian journey? Are you that person now helping to guide a friend or family member? We all have our gifts but often we are not good at recognising this let alone celebrating them. Recently I had a meeting with someone in connection with Mothers' Union and at the end she said 'Thank you for listening'. Simply sharing a cup of tea with someone can be so important. Even though we are a worldwide movement each and every one of us is important.

In June it was more than a cup of tea that I shared with thousands of other people at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party. I was invited as one of several Diocesan Presidents to represent Mothers' Union along with Robert Dawes, Senior Development Manager at Mary Sumner House. Apparently, DPs are invited to attend as a way of Her Majesty thanking organisations for the work they do. So, I attended on your behalf. The day was lovely and sunny and came at the end of our Diocesan retreat at Holland House so it was from Evesham that I made the journey to London. As well as being a great honour to attend one of the best things about the day was meeting other people including DPs from Southwell and Nottingham, Sodor and Man, Connor and Bristol. We met at Mary Sumner house for coffee and midday prayers with Bev (our CEO) and other staff and then went on to the Palace. It was so nice to be in a relaxed setting and be able to chat informally. I do find that when I make time to do this I gain so much. Perhaps that is the thought I will leave you.

The little things count - being with people, listening and experiencing their journey - sharing the highs and lows and, most importantly, making sure that we are grounded in our prayer life and nourish our faith.

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

The personal prayer of Mary Sumner, founder of Mothers' Union.

With my love and prayers for you all.

Jackie

Jackie Brocklebank, Diocesan President

Let us Pray!

Prayer is vital to the Mothers' Union - it is the foundation to everything that we do and it can make a huge difference to lives both on an individual and community basis. To help us in our prayer ministry we have the privilege of leading prayers in the Cathedral four times a year. In August it was the turn of the West Birmingham Group to lead the prayers. It was encouraging that we had 15 members there - and the prayers used were taken from the Mothers' Union website. Each month there are new Midday Prayers for Monday to Saturday - 6 days x 5 minutes = 30 minutes for Cathedral Prayers. Sorted! If you are able please do come along and spend half an hour praying - it is very uplifting. The Mothers' Union website is a huge prayer resource - please take time and look! http://www.themothersunion.org/content/monthly-midday-prayers

Rowena Nicholls, Vice President

First meeting! St Mary's Handsworth

What a great meeting! Full of enthusiastic future members. The meeting opened with prayers and was followed by a sharing of information about the way forward. I couldn't have done this without the support of Erica Parker (Vice President) and Sandra Golding (Community Development Coordinator). Erica will continue to support our new branch while we get to grips with organising meetings and welcoming speakers to enhance our understanding of Mothers' Union and to inform our future plans within the community at St Mary's.

Eureka Drayton, Faith & Policy Coordinator and new Branch Leader, St Mary's Handsworth

Midsummer celebrations at Bishops Croft

Written by Roving Reporter and Fundraising Coordinator, Sally Cox

After months of meetings and planning - too many coffees to mention - the 24th June dawned, warm, bright and sunny, just as we had ordered.

Bishop David kindly allowed us to use his lovely garden as the venue for our summer fundraiser. I'm sure all of you who managed to get along would agree that it was a fabulous afternoon of fun, friendliness, food and frolics! Not to mention a few Pimms, variety of entertainment and a healthy profit of over £1200 for our citywide projects.

Future Dates

- **Advent prayers**

1 December 2017 Carrs Lane 10.30am, led by Revd Kathy Lloyd Roberts

- **General Meeting**

17-18 September 2018 Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, Wales

- **Cathedral Prayers** *12.05 - 12.30pm*

Monday 13 November 2017 Solihull
Monday 12 February 2018 Aston and City
Monday 14 May 2018 Polesworth
Monday 13 August 2018 Coleshill and Yardley
Monday 12 November 2018 Moseley and Shirley

- **Diocesan Council Meeting**

3 March 2018 Carrs Lane 10.00 for 10.30am
Friday 6 July 2018 St Laurence Northfield 6.45pm for 7.15pm
27 October 2018 Carrs Lane 10.00 for 10.30am

- **eNewsletter** *Deadline December issue 15 November 2017*
- **Festival Service**

21 April 2018 Birmingham Cathedral 11am

- **Fundraising**

19 May 2018 Afternoon Tea 2.30pm St Laurence, Northfield
28 July 2018 Summer Lunch 12.30pm All Saints, Four Oaks

- **Link Magazine** *Deadline 20 January 2018*
- **16 Days of Activism** *25 November - 10 December 2017*
- **Wave of prayer** *15 - 17 January 2018*

We welcome new members into the fellowship of Mothers' Union

St Peter, Hall Green
Jessica Foster, Angela Stanford
St Peter, Maney
Christine White, Sylvia Cotgreave
St John the Baptist, Knowle
Iris Napper, Kate Boyall, Hazel Weaving, Revd Matt Simpson, Rosemary Bowcott, Cherrie Morgan, Eric Yates, Dorothy Birchell, Maureen Asquith
St Alphege, Solihull
Christine Davis, Christine Feasey
All Saints, Four Oaks
Pat Brighton, Michelle Drinkwater, returning and founder member Pam Pritchett
St Michael's Bartley Green
Miss Joyce Ricketts and returning member Mrs Sheila Rooney
St Philip and St James, Hodge Hill
Jean Davies and Julia Lofthouse
St James, Hill
Sue Phelps
All Saints, Grendon
Glynis Gayton

Family Matters

We celebrate the life and work of members who have recently died

Margaret Botterill *St Gabriel, Weoley Castle*
Mary Irving *St Mary and St Margaret, Castle Bromwich*
Doris Watkins *St Barnabas, Erdington*
Marjorie Broadhurst *St James the Great, Shirley*
Pam Cooper *St Alphege, Solihull*
Pat Walker *St Mary, Hobs Moat*
Pamela Ferlance *St Bartholomew, Allens Cross*
Peggy Betty Leach *St Paul, Hamstead*

We congratulate members on their birthdays

Emily (Pem) Brown 100
20 February 2017 St Mary's Hobs Moat, Solihull
Betty Day 95
9 May 2017 St Stephen & Wulstun, Selly Park
Kathleen Hawthorn 95
16 July 2017 St Barnabas, Erdington
Joan Sabin 95
7 July 2017 The Ascension, Hall Green
Ivy Burchell 90
7 August 2017 St James, Hill
Christine Davis 90
18 August 2017 St Alphege, Solihull
Dorothy McCuan 95
17 September 2017 St John the Baptist, Knowle

and Anniversaries

Golden Wedding

Susan and Peter Johnson *St John the Baptist, Knowle*
Carolyn and Paul Mason *St Gabriel, Weoley Castle*

Diamond Wedding

Mary and Phil Vince *St John the Baptist, Knowle*
Jean and Neville Taylor *St James the Great, Shirley*
Joan and Bob Rowbotham *St Mary and St Margaret, Castle Bromwich*

Birmingham Children's Hospital

After many weeks of DBS checks, health checks and induction training, Mothers' Union have started their duties at The Children's Hospital. We are starting small, with a weekly 2 hour session with three volunteers providing a presence in the beautiful Chapel, to listen, support and offer comfort to anyone that seeks a calm oasis in the hubbub of the hospital. There has been excellent support from the Chaplaincy staff, especially The Revd Kathryn Darby and The Revd Paul Nash, who are helping to guide us all. We hope to extend our presence and duties as time goes on. Please keep us in your prayers.

Erica Parker, Vice President

CDC NEWS

A total of 133 job seekers have attended Holy Trinity Birchfield Job Club which started back in January 2017. Advisors have been trained and volunteers support the regular weekly meetings on Thursdays between 10am and 12.30pm. The Job Club received start-up funding from Birmingham Mothers' Union, funds from Holy Trinity's MU branch to buy a laptop computer, and further funds from the Handsworth Charity, based at St Mary's Church. Two more laptops and a laser printer have been purchased and two basic mobile 'phones, as well as a modem to access the internet. The job club has links with the Job Centre for vacancies, and with Birmingham Metropolitan College for training courses for adults. In the coming weeks and months, they hope to recruit and train more volunteers.

Sandra Golding, Community Development Coordinator

Pam and Maisie visiting Mothers' Union in Grenada

Greetings from Mothers' Union in the Parish of St David's and St Paul's, Grenada, West Indies

I visited St David's and St Paul's Church, Grenada (Maisie McCarthy's Church) in July. The ladies sent their greetings to us all; they are a thriving group of committed women, just as we are.

Pamela Nelson, Training Facilitator, Diocese of Birmingham

16 Days of Activism on Gender Based Violence 25 November to 10 December 2017

This year, Mothers' Union is focussing on the issue of stigma. Members and others around the world are being called to talk about gender-based violence, and challenge myths and harmful attitudes around it. We are calling on people everywhere to: break the silence surrounding gender-based violence, lift the shame which is often placed unfairly on survivors, and shift the blame from victim to perpetrator. Please remember in your prayers all those who suffer at this time and pray for the work of Mothers' Union who work in communities to break this silence. Pray also for Women's Aid and our project coordinator Dorcas Jongwe. The resources for this campaign are now online at http://www.themothersunion.org/content/16-days-activism-2017

Merciful God, use us to speak against social injustice with a clear and influential voice in a world where the vulnerable strive to be heard. Give us resolve to speak boldly on behalf of those who suffer in silence. Make us strong and effective advocates for those whose voice is too weak to be heard.

MU Reach Out meetings St Mary and St Margaret, Castle Bromwich

Led by three members Julie, Debbie and Chris plus non-member Laurie. Our first event was a chocolate and drink tasting evening. Lindt kindly donated some of their delicious chocolate and we received a welcome grant from 'Mums in Brum'. Great fun was had while we sampled the chocolate with a slurp of drink and tried to guess what we could taste in each of them. The drinks were rose, red wine, white wine, green tea and black coffee. It was amazing to taste the different flavours! This was followed by a quiz and raffle, and we only used a small amount from our grant and raised £74 to go towards the Mothers' Union Annual Summer Appeal.

This was followed by a second Reach Out event where we heard about Debbie, who was one of the survey children of 1946. We learned how this had helped develop our health and education over the years. We exchanged photos and stories of our times at school, the different ways of teaching and punishment and yes anyone caught misbehaving had to wear the cone of shame. To burn off energy we held a school sports day which consisted of blow football and yes chocolate concrete and pink custard was served. Only a small amount of our grant was used. A quiz and raffle was held and once more money was raised.

There are another two events planned - a family walk in the New Year and a Bollywood evening. Are the evenings successful? I would say yes, we are raising the profile and showcasing the work of the Mothers' Union within our branch in a fun and exciting way. Will we get new members? That is a big question, but who knows we will just have to 'Wait and See'.

Mary Jones, St Mary and St Margaret, Castle Bromwich

Mothers' Union around the World WARSAW Calling!

One of my Mothers' Union members and friend, Dianne, lived for many years in Poland and her husband continues to work there. When staying there, Dianne attends the Anglican Church in Warsaw and naturally talked to the Chaplain and the congregation about Mothers' Union. Father David Brown was very keen to hear more - and so after many conversations and emails - he invited me to talk about our work and preach! The Gospel reading was from Matthew - when Jesus sent his disciples to go out to the lost sheep and to heal the sick and proclaim the good news. He sent them out of their comfort zone - a perfect link to our work - that Mothers' Union members venture into the unknown to offer help and support to individuals, families and communities in need. So off we went to Warsaw - and one Sunday in June we attended the church and did it!! The church attracts people from a very wide community including ex pats and those working in British and American embassies - often travelling long distances to attend. All went well - the 'sermon' was much appreciated - and now Dianne and the European President will hopefully further develop the links and maybe open a new Mothers' Union branch.

Rowena Nicholls, Vice President

Congratulations to three special Solihull Ladies

On Sunday 2 April three members of St Alphege Mothers' Union - Elaine Diskin, Karen Stapley and Julia Hanson completed the Solihull half marathon. Karen came 1st in her age group with a fantastic time of 1hr 58 mins 41 secs which improved her personal best by 13 minutes. Elaine and Julia put their training into reality and encouraged each other throughout the run, finishing together after 2hrs 30 mins 25 secs. Thanks for all the good wishes and sponsorship, they raised £1100 for Mothers' Union, certainly making the sore knees very worthwhile. And yes, they are all still running! Well done ladies and heartfelt thanks for your efforts.

Susan Leach, Secretary, St Alphege Mothers' Union

Annual Theme Resources 2018 "In Mary Sumner's Footsteps"

'Our Society is a company of mothers, and good women possessed with motherly hearts, women of all classes, high and humble, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, great ladies of the land and poor mothers in small homes. We have bound ourselves together to love and help one another.'
Mary Sumner

2018 is a significant year for Mothers' Union, with our triennial elections and the beginning of global conversations throughout the Provinces to inform our way ahead. As we look to the future we want to build on our heritage, and in particular, the life and vision of our founder, 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.
The themed resources for 2018 are now available on the website. You can find them here.
http://www.themothersunion.org/content/annual-theme-resources-2018

Malawi Container 12 news...

Malawi Container 12 was loaded on 10 June and has arrived safely in Malawi. It has been unloaded at the different destinations. Many thanks.

Elizabeth Walker, Worldwide Representative, Diocese of Birmingham

THE NEXT EDITION

Please send all items for Issue 139 of *Birmingham Link* to Mothers' Union Office,
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