



# MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

## SOUTHWARK

No. 213 Spring 2006

### LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Did you see the article in 'Woman's Weekly' at the end of January about the MU? Entitled 'Women's groups – not just jam and *Jerusalem*' it mentioned a number of organisations, and focused on the WI and MU in more detail. The MU section gave some background information and had short pieces based on conversations with Jean Price (the central Unit Co-ordinator for Marketing) and Kate Buckley from Christ Church in Purley. These two interviews show the wide variety of work undertaken by the MU as we respond to God's call to strengthen and support marriage and family life, both locally and worldwide. Kate says that she's glad she joined the MU because it is incredibly fulfilling, and ends by talking about the difference we can make through our MU membership. I'm sure that you can all echo these feelings – and I am looking forward to reading about the work you do in deaneries and branches as the report forms come in. Thank you to Kate for taking this opportunity to publicise our work so effectively, and to all of you who share in the friendship and fellowship that we experience in the MU in Southwark Diocese.

We are very grateful to Dick Turpin who 'stepped in to cover a couple of issues' of our Southwark MU Diocesan News and then edited it for three years. We have really valued his gentle reminders about copy dates and the commitment of time and energy which have ensured that the newsletters have been produced on a regular basis and of high quality. Dick has resigned from this post due to ill-health, and we wish him and his wife well, and will continue to remember them in our prayers. Denise Skeet has been our 'guest-editor' for this issue, and we are grateful to her for ensuring continuity whilst we make longer-term arrangements.

As our election process gets underway, do please pray for those who are making decisions about whether or not to stand for office – and be ready to respond to God's call to you, whatever that may be!

With my best wishes

*Ann Wright*

**FAMILY FUN DAY!**  
**Saturday 23 September**  
**at**  
**Southwark Cathedral**  
**10.00am - 3.00pm**



Fun for all ages, workshops such as face painting, bell ringing, drama, singing, art and craft, local walks of interest.

Further details will be sent to branch leaders in May.

**Make a date for your diaries!**

## CHRISTINGLES AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

"Six Hundred and Fifty? Surely not as many as that!" These were the thoughts that passed through our minds as Stephanie Lawrence, Jenny Toye and I volunteered to help other Southwark Mothers' Union members make the Christingles ready for the Children's Society annual service in Westminster Abbey, several weeks before Christmas.

Undaunted, we travelled up to London and were admitted through the Abbey cloisters into an inner sanctum, where we found a hive of activity. Crates of oranges, yards of red ribbon, boxes of candles and numerous packets of sweets and raisins greeted us. "Hello, ladies, you are very welcome, will you sit here", and in a few minutes we were part of the team - impaling jelly bears and dolly mixtures on cocktail sticks, inserting candles and aluminium foil into ready-ribboned oranges and placing the finished Christingles on trays ready to be counted, and added to the dozens of others already waiting in wooden boxes. The aroma of cut oranges was wonderful, and there was a very low buzz of conversation, as everyone concentrated on the matter in hand.

The boxes of finished Christingles slowly piled up - four hundred, five hundred - just a few more to go -

and we were invited to down tools and go into Westminster Abbey for the midday Eucharist. We received a very warm welcome from the Abbey staff, and took part in a lovely, very simple communion service in the nave, when we realised that we had been working non-stop for about an hour and a half.

A quick stop for coffee in the cloisters and we re-ascended to the Christingle room, to find that the total had reached 650 and we were only needed to help tidy up and put away the chairs and tables - and sign the register! Carolyn Ritchie, on behalf of the Children's Society, was there to thank us, and we had time for short chats with friends from other parts of the Diocese, before the obligatory photo-call.

After a brief visit to the House of Fraser in Victoria Street, and a little Christmas shopping, we arrived back in Reigate having had an excellent time of friendship and common purpose. A few days later we each received a very kind letter from Carolyn, thanking us for our help and enclosing the Order of Service for the Abbey.

*Alison Stagg, St Mark's Church, Reigate*

## NEWS FROM OUR NIGERIAN LINK DIOCESES

Aba Diocese MU continue to keep us well informed about their and other women's activities, but sadly it is some time since we received news from our other links.

At Christmas we received a lovely card from Hope Nwaobi, the MU Worker, which depicted their beautiful Cathedral and contained greetings to all Southwark MU members.

In the accompanying letter, Mrs Nwaobi and Mrs Ezuoke, Diocesan President, assured us that we had been really prayed for during last August's Wave of Prayer. Their outreach to the less privileged continues. Through their Samaritan Purse Programme two bungalows have been built for widows and they were dedicated by the Bishop at a joyful Service when they were handed over to the new residents.

The MU annual visit to Aba prison had been wonderful and glorified God's name. Over 200 members attended the 2005 A&O Unit's AGM which looked at "Being One's Brother's Keeper" at home, in the Church and in society at large. The day included worship, a talk on the theme, and practical sessions on processing cassava flour for

confectionaries and the porridge-like foo foo. A rewarding Marriage Counselling Seminar had the theme of "Christ is our Sufficiency".

The Naomi portable water project is now in production with a factory staff of 8 and a newly purchased delivery van. Our ongoing prayers for this project are requested. The recently opened "Dazzle Restaurant", opposite St Michael's Cathedral run by Diocesan women is providing a moderately priced eating place for workers and the general public.

Aba suggests that we support each other in achieving the Aim & Objectives of MU by lifting one another in prayer, sharing our programmes and projects, giving aid and by exchange visits. Their letter concludes with "May there be showers of God's blessing upon all (Southwark) members as we continue to lift all to God in prayer." So may we too remember members in Aba, Calabar, Niger Delta North and Uyo in prayer and especially at branch meetings throughout the year.

I remain grateful for photos of MU activities to send to our link Diocese - please keep them coming!

*Annabel Davidson (Nigerian Links Correspondent)*

## ENROLMENTS, ENROLMENTS, ENROLMENTS!

On Sunday 13 November 2005, we enjoyed a wonderful Area Worship Service at Christ Church, Purley. The worship was led by a band called "Cross Purpose" and Ann Wright was our speaker. There were many enrolments from around the area and a commissioning of a Branch Leader. I was thrilled to have six new members join our branch at Christ Church, including a husband and wife and two mums from another Church where there is no MU. Afterwards we enjoyed fellowship together over tea and cakes. Thank you to all the cake makers – delicious!

*Kate Buckley*

## DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR MU BRANCH

A bright, cold morning greeted the congregation and MU members of St Andrew, Coulsdon when they arrived to mark a double celebration in the branch history at the Eucharist on Sunday 29 January. The new MU banner was commissioned and dedicated to service by Revd Vicki Sims, Priest in Charge, and seven MU members were presented with long service awards by Ann Wright, Southwark MU Diocesan President, and Branch Leader Jo Denvil. Long service awards for 50 years were presented to Babs Norris and Marjorie White, and for 40 years service to Janice Cockcroft, Stella Corney, Audrey Garnett, Eve Holland and Wyn Witham. Congratulations and thank you for your exemplary dedication, ladies.

The banner was designed by MU branch member and ordinand Linda Williams for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is dominated by a contemporary style figure of Mary and Jesus beneath the luminescent cross of the Church of St Andrew, which radiates light in yellows, golds and sparkling white – the liturgical colours for Incarnation and Resurrection. The blue bands at the sides and top of the banner reflect those in the two previous MU banners of the 1930s and 1960s. Linda says her design is intended to show 'the light of the Spirit working in the MU to bring light into dark places of the world today.' It was beautifully made by Juliet Hemingray of Church Textiles, Derby, and replaces another beautiful but sadly worn banner made by the nuns at East Grinstead Convent.

*Report and photo by  
Rose Gill*



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please note the following dates in your diaries

Wednesday	29 <sup>th</sup> March	Diocesan Council at Mary Sumner House
Wednesday	17 <sup>th</sup> May	Festival Services at the Cathedral 11 am and Eucharist at 7.30 pm
Saturday	24 <sup>th</sup> June	Central MU Annual Meeting in Dublin
Saturday	15 <sup>th</sup> July	Diocesan Annual Meeting – venue tba
Saturday	23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Family Fun Day at Southwark Cathedral
Wednesday	11 <sup>th</sup> October	Diocesan Council at Mary Sumner House
Tuesday/Thursday	17 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> October	Retreat at Wychcroft

## ANSWERING GOD'S CALL.

I recently undertook some outreach work for my church. For some reason on the day I didn't feel like doing it but knew that I should because I had said I would do so. Before setting out, I joined others in prayer that our Lord would be with us and that we would be well received. I came back refreshed and energised - I had reached out and made contact with people who were happy to invite me to meet with them to hear about our Lord. I had answered God's call to share my faith and was strengthened myself.

The Mothers' Union offers us many opportunities to help people, not just those overseas but those here in our towns and villages. For instance taking time to talk to people who are lonely, people who are sad, young people needing support and encouragement, listening to children who love to talk to adults but often busy parents haven't the time to listen. Our MU speakers value prayer support as they give talks, and we all know families that need our prayer support. Take stock of what you do, ask yourself if you would do those things as well as you do without the help of our Lord, and then you will realise how often you have already answered God's call, and it is as you do that you will recognise what God is calling you to do next.

Our P & S Representatives day will be held on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April, at Trinity House 11 - 3p.m. Fleur Dorrell will be speaking on 'Answering God's Call. Anyone interested in our Unit is welcome to attend but please let me or Anne Love know if you are planning to come.

*Lord, as we offer you  
all that is ordinary and everyday in our lives,  
we ask you to give us the power of your Spirit  
that we may do the ordinary things of life  
in an extraordinary way.*

Nicholas Hutchinson.

*Mary Garman  
Prayer & Spirituality Unit Co-ordinator.*

The videos and DVDs held at the Office can now be borrowed free of charge (you only pay postage to return them to the Office). New video and DVD on Zimbabwe now available. (Prepared by Hilary and Peter Brand for our Diocesan link, but includes M

## THE 'OOH – AAH' FACTOR

Having heard a talk by our Chief Executive, Reg Bailey at a recent Units Day, I thought I would share with you briefly some of the points he made. He called it the 'ooh-aah' factor for the following reasons.

In 'aah', the first 'a' is for '**attitude**' – how will we get our message across to people? What will we do in Southwark to tell people about the MU? How can we get our message across if we are not excited and enthusiastic about it first! The second 'a' is for '**atmosphere**' – how can we be willing and encouraging? Do we take into account that some people may do things differently from us? Do we give help when and where it is needed? The final 'h' is for the '**Holy Spirit**'. He reminded us that we are asked to converse not convert. Do you have room for the Holy Spirit at your MU branch?

And the 'ooh' – well that stands for 'Who me?? YES, YOU!' (Reg's own inimitable style). You count, but do you really believe it? He left us with a challenge – will you do something daring, will you engage in mission?

***Don't forget to return Branch Report Forms and subs to Jean Hatton by 31<sup>st</sup> March***

**YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS** for the summer issue of the News should be received at the Diocesan Office not later than 25<sup>th</sup> April

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July. All members welcome to attend which will include Triennial Elections – nomination papers will be available at Diocesan Council in March

### **THE MOTHERS' UNION SOUTHWARK DIOCESE**

Linked with the Dioceses of ABA, BUTERE, CALABAR  
NORTHERN TERRITORY, NIGER DELTA NORTH & UYO

<i>Patron:</i>	THE LORD BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE
<i>Secretary:</i>	Mrs. A. Love, Southwark Mothers' Union Office Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London SE1 1HW Tel. 020 7939 9459 (Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, term time only 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.)
<i>Diocesan President:</i>	Mrs. Ann Wright Tel: 01293 821322 e-mail address: wright@btinternet.com
<i>Diocesan Chaplain:</i>	Rev. G. Paddick, Tel: 01342 832391
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Mrs. J. Hatton Tel: 01737 765 759
<i>Literature Representative</i>	Emerald Kendall Tel: 020 8654 3271
<i>Website address:</i>	<a href="http://www.southwark.anglican.org/mu">http://www.southwark.anglican.org/mu</a>
<i>e-mail address:</i>	<a href="mailto:mu@southwark.anglican.org">mu@southwark.anglican.org</a>

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