



Southwark MU News

No. 214 Summer 2006

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter, Anne, Mary, Sharon and I are busy with the final preparations for the Festival Services, and resisting the temptation to sit or work in our gardens. By the time you read it, the services will have taken place, and our gardens may well look much tidier! I hope that you found the services encouraging as we listened together to God's call and respond in appropriate ways. Anne has tapes of the services in the office if you would like one – just contact her and ask for a copy.

Fleur Dorrell, Head of the newly re-named 'Faith and Policy Unit' at Mary Sumner House, came to speak at our P&S Day at Trinity House in April. She brought with her the exciting news that a new branch opened in Baghdad on Easter Sunday, with around 100 members. Please pray for this branch and its members as they join our worldwide fellowship. Those who came to Diocesan Council will also have heard that the Relief Fund made donations of around £95,000 in the first three months of 2006, and only had £10,000 left in March. This is due to the prolonged drought which is affecting so many countries in East Africa, and where our help is so greatly appreciated. If you can hold a fund raising event for the Relief Fund, we will ensure that your donations are sent straight off to Mary Sumner House to continue this vital work.

We are very grateful to Kate Buckley who illustrated the prayer card used at the Festival Services. The prayer is based on words from the service for Mary Sumner Day which was sent out to each branch earlier in the year. When Kate brought the card for me, she jotted down, 'I immediately thought of the sun / sunset for the 'light' and then boundaries and horizons seem to lead towards a journey.' Her lovely design calls us to continue our journey with Christ into the unknown future. May you all know his presence and light as you respond to his call and join in his dance of life.

With best wishes

Ann Wight

Answering God's call – with knitting needles!

The branch report forms showed some of the range of projects that our members undertake as they answer God's call to practical action for their local communities. Here are a few examples of knitting and sewing projects, making clothes and blankets for local baby units or to send overseas.

MU members at Holy Cross, Motspur Park, make stockings out of Christmas material for the children's ward of St George's Hospital. Tadworth make and send baby clothes out to their link in Tanzania. St Mary's Addiscombe and St Saviour Eltham knit and sew clothes for the premature baby unit at their local hospitals.

If you or your branch are involved in a knitting or sewing project, please contact Alison Bennett via the MU Office at Trinity House. She would like to hear about what you make and where you send finished goods, so that we can pass the information on to other branches who are interested in starting similar projects. Copies of any special patterns used would also be helpful

Alison Bennett

Don't forget ...

FAMILY FUN DAY!

Saturday 23 September
Southwark Cathedral
10 am to 3 pm



Fun for all ages

Workshops include face painting, drama, handbells, art & craft, local walks of interest.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

ST. PAUL'S, HOOK

The Mothers' Union Branch at St Paul's Hook started in July 1891 and we are celebrating our 115th birthday this year.

I offer invitations to our special *Celebration Eucharist Service* on 11th July 2006 at 7.30 p.m. at St Paul's Church, Hook Road, Hook, Chessington.

The President and Preacher will be Bishop John Flack (former MU Central Chaplain). Further information and enquiries from the branch leader:- 0208 397 2360

TADWORTH OVERSEAS DAY

For as long as I can remember (and I have been a member for 15 years) we have set aside a day early in the year when we congregate for a fund-raising lunch in aid of MU Overseas projects or the Emergency Relief Fund.

This started as a modest 'do' in a member's home and has snowballed into a full-blown Deanery event with Raffle, Bring & Buy, and MU Enterprise goods for sale. Members of our branch at The Good Shepherd prepare and serve a home-cooked hot meal with choice of puddings and, of course, wine! We invite an after lunch speaker to tell us news from abroad, particularly with respect to the latest MU projects. Ann Wright, Rosemary Kempself and Jan Gosling have all been kind enough to speak to us in the last few years. We now hold our Overseas Day in our Church Hall and about 65 members, husbands and friends attend. It is a wonderful way of raising money for those less fortunate than ourselves as we have the chance to enjoy the fellowship of members from our Reigate Deanery.

This year we raised a record total of £470 for which we are most grateful to all who came and donated.

Margaret Fox, Tadworth

PASSOVER TO EASTER

On Thursday 13th April (Maundy Thursday) we held for the second year running our Passover Meal. We were very pleased to welcome members of the congregation and also five members of a nearby church, including their vicar. We celebrated the Passover, taking a good part of it from the Jewish service, but as it would have been rather long we had to shorten it with a suggested ending in a Christian way. Before we completed the ceremony we had a meal of shepherds pie followed by apple crumble. The shepherds pie was of course made with lamb to represent the lamb eaten at the Passover. This was an enjoyable evening, which we hope to repeat again. After clearing up we went on to the Maundy Thursday service. We were also able to raise through donations, money for the Relief Fund.

On the Saturday it was decorating with flowers the Cross that we had made from the Christmas tree. This was an idea we took from the Home and Family several years ago. During Lent the bare Cross is decorated with verses or symbols by the older children eventually ending up with a crown of thorns and a purple cloth. This year our Cross was also used during the Good Friday 3 hour devotion. Then with the joy of Easter it is displayed with flowers.

Pearl Virno, St Matthew's Redhill

THANKS

After my appeal in the Southwark News for bias binding to help in making little dresses for Africa, I recently received a lovely parcel of cotton material. I am sure it was from an MU member, postcode CR2 and so through this column I give you my very grateful thanks.

Marion Dallison

We would be pleased to include news from your branch or deanery in Southwark MU News. All contributions for the Autumn issue should be sent to the Editor, Denise Skeet, by 25 July

SCIP Update

Thank you to all the Branches, Deaneries and individual members who have contributed to the SCIP Fund. This money is used to support 'Children and families affected by imprisonment'. For a number of years we have donated money for Christmas presents for children visiting prisoners at Belmarsh, which has been coordinated by Jan Gosling. Early in 2006, the Trustees also agreed to fund the purchase of a digital camera and printer for use on "Family Visits Days" at the prison. These occasional days provide an opportunity for prisoners who have earned enough points through good behaviour, undertaking special duties or courses in the prison etc. to spend time with their families in a relaxed atmosphere and without the restrictions that are enforced on normal visits. They can eat together as a family, play games, draw and enjoy each other's company. The digital camera and printer allows both prisoner and family to have a photo to remind them of the day – for some prisoners it is the first time they can have a picture of their children to keep in the prison. Our camera has already been used in the Visits Centre and we have received a lovely 'thank you' letter from the Visits Centre Manager – and the Prison Service magazine includes a picture from the day and mentions our gift in an article on the Family Visits Day.

(Picture – Jan Gosling presenting the camera to staff at Belmarsh)



JURY SERVICE AT THE OLD BAILEY

When the brown envelope arrived and I could see the words "Her Majesty's Court Service", my first thoughts were 'What have I done?' Opening the envelope I discovered it was a call to jury service at the Old Bailey starting on the day of my birthday!

On the first day, I had mixed feelings. I was apprehensive – would I be put on a case that lasted for months, or one that was particularly serious and harrowing? Also there was a feeling of suppressed excitement, of doing something out of the ordinary in an historic setting. What I had heard from others who had done jury service, however, led me to believe that there would be a lot of boring waiting around and I may not get called at all! I took a large, thick Dickens book to read, but managed only fifty pages before things happened.

I was chosen, at random, for a jury on a rape and murder case. I have been asked if it was an 'interesting' experience – I am not sure that is the right word. Yes, parts of it were interesting, I learnt quite a lot about police scene of crime and forensic procedures, tracing phone calls from mobile phones and quite a lot about DNA. At times, it was surreally like watching an "Inspector Morse" story, trying to work out if x happened, could y be true? It was surreal, until you remembered that we were talking about the untimely and brutal death of a real person.

I count myself lucky that the trial only lasted two and a half weeks, that the evidence was pretty much 'clear cut' and that the jury did not take long to reach a verdict and it was unequivocally unanimous. I was not prepared, however, for the level of emotion after the verdict was announced. The victim's family were naturally emotional and this could not fail to move us all. Also, having tried to keep an objective and analytical view of the facts up to this point, but now no longer needing to, meant that my feelings of grief for the victim, the family and for the path chosen by the defendant came to the surface.

The whole experience had been relatively straightforward and painless for me, however. I was very glad of my faith, knowing that I was not having to do this on my own, but that God was with me throughout. The court staff were excellent, very patient and respectful, and quite used to jurors who were unsure what they were supposed to be doing. My time also ended on a high note – they gave us a tour around the rest of the Old Bailey, something the general public does not often get.

Mary Harrison

From the Prayer and Spirituality Unit.

Fleur Dorrell was the speaker at the recent Prayer and Spirituality representatives day. She spoke on 'Answering God's Call' and gave us much to think about. God's call can be for us to do something quite simple or it could indeed be life changing. If, like me, you start the day with prayer you will know that God is always ready to listen to us - but are we ready to hear him? Are we able to discern what he is calling us to do? Fleur gave us seven markers in answering God's call:

Passion: I'll seek a connection between the deepest passions of my heart and the passion in the heart of God .

Place: I'll seek to connect with God in the place in which I stand, for the place to which he is calling me.

Purpose: I'll look for connections between the evident purposes of my life and God's purposes for my context and culture.

Power: I'll seek to connect my strengths and my weakness to the power of God, and seek his transformation in both.

Process: I'll connect with the process and pace by which God has worked, is now working and will work in my life.

Perspective: I'll look for the connection between my role in the mission of God and the wider perspective of history, finding my place in God's promise-plan.

Prayer: I'll pray daily to discern God's will for me, and to trust how and when to answer God's call in my life.

(adapted from 'Six Habits of Highly Connected People', Gerard Kelly with Ben Wickham).

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The 2006 Annual Meeting of Southwark MU will take place on Saturday 15 July, at All Saints, Sanderstead (road 2022) from 10.30 – 12.30
The meeting will include any elections required under the constitution.

All members are invited to attend this meeting.

Prayer of Discernment by Joyce Rupp

Spirit of Guidance, I see before me numerous choices and a decision to be made.

There is division in my heart. Sometimes I want none of what I find. Sometimes I want it all. Sometimes I want to give up making decisions and wish that the future would go away.

I entrust my decision-making into your hand, ready to do my part but also knowing that I cannot do this without your help. Lead me through all the unsure, unclear, doubtful, hesitant, and questioning moments that are mine as I search to find the right way in which to go. Grant me the grace to choose freely, without being attached to the outcome.

I trust that you will be with me as I make my decision prayerfully and with faith. Assure me that our peace will rest deep within me as I make the decision that seems best for me at the time.

I may continue to experience feelings of turmoil and confusion, but deep within I know that I can return to the settled place in me where you always dwell.

Guide and Director of my life, I place my life in your hand. Lead me to the path that will best deepen and strengthen my relationship with you. Amen.

Mary Garman - P & S Co-ordinator.

THE MOTHERS' UNION SOUTHWARK DIOCESE

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

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