

Peculiar Times!

News from Branches

Fressingfield - This sounds like a memorable meeting. I'm sure many of us could give examples of similar difficulties!! At our Annual meeting in February, our branch leader, Anna Vessey stood down after nine years, and I was elected as new branch leader. All the members were very grateful for Anna's inspirational leadership, but made me very welcome. In March, I had a bit of a baptism of fire! Our speaker was due to arrive at least 45 minutes before the meeting to set up his film show, but his SATNAV got him lost and he didn't arrive until after we had started the meeting. In spite of huge efforts on his part and ours, both before and during the meeting we were unable to get the technology to work to enable him to show us his presentation on the big screen. He eventually turned his laptop towards us but those at the back, gallantly, didn't complain that they couldn't see. In addition to that, the member who was supposed to be running the Bring and Buy stall had an accident just before our meeting and was unable to come, and the member who was due to lead the prayers had rushed off to London to take care of her daughter, who had a skiing accident and needed help with her young son. I look forward to seeing what adventure the April meeting holds! Christine Christian

Newmarket has a growing Branch with two leaders – Daphne Knott and Deidre Grosvenor. They have an evening meeting each month and a regular communion service. Two recent speakers were Revd. Max Drinkwater from Haverhill who was previously in Newmarket and Revd. Susan Allison who spoke about Godly Play.

Walton Branch were impressed with the beautiful words when they used the Mothers' Union Mothering Sunday Order of Service for the first time this year. It was such a beautiful sensitive order of service that was much appreciated. We will certainly be doing it again next year. Wendy Fellingham.

Kesgrave Branch We will be holding a Coffee Morning on Tuesday 26th April in the Fred Upson (British Legion) Hall in Kesgrave from 10am -12noon. All Welcome.

Hoxne MU branch has become the Hoxne Fellowship Group. As Diocesan members we opened our new venture on April 5th called 'The Little Lambs', carer, baby and toddler monthly afternoon 'drop in' sessions, timed to dovetail with school pick up. After advertising and word of mouth we welcomed seven mothers with nine babies and toddlers to the village pavilion on the playing field. Some of these were long term local, others new to the village, two from nearby villages and one mum was a recent arrival to the UK. We provided some toys, books, craft activities, plus mugs of tea for the adults. New friends were made, old acquaintances rekindled and the mums were looked after while our priest in charge chatted with everyone. There were three MU helpers who, as we cleared away had a deep sense of achievement that we were fulfilling a need and contributing to the lives of these young people. Cathie McGregor

We hope to have some pictures from this new group next month.

Other News

Lady Day Service 25th March in St. Edmundsbury Cathedral

After times with minimal social interaction over the last two years, it was a pleasure to gather in the Cathedral for this special service for the commissioning of our Diocesan President, Trustees, Officers and Community of Interest Leads. The President and Preacher was The Right Revd. Tim Stevens CBE. The new MU Diocesan Chaplain, Revd Catherine Forsdike was also present.

Radio Suffolk Mothering Sunday Service

Our Diocesan President Linda Ginn read the prayers at this service which was led by Revd. Linda Peel. It honoured the place of Mothers and recognised that for some people, Mothering Sunday can be a difficult time. If you would like to listen to this service you can find it on BBC Sounds where it will be available for the next 2 weeks.

Clewer Initiative are providing training courses for parents, grandparents, foster parents and guardians about county lines, to learn more about how organised crime gangs operate. These courses will look at how gangs target and trap young people across the country, the impact it can have on individuals, families and communities, as well as discussing how we can break the cycle of exploitation. Please do get in touch with clewerinitiative@churchofengland.org if you have any questions about these courses.

Connected Magazines The latest edition has been sent out recently. If you have not received your copy, please contact Clare Thomas on 01473 832808.

MSH Meeting about the unfolding crisis in Ukraine

Several dioceses were represented by 28 participants for a Zoom meeting in March to discuss the current MU response and how this could be strengthened as we move forward. CEO Bev Jullien, Adam Sach (Head of Fundraising) and Aparajita Burjwal (Digital Comms Officer) were also present. Discussion groups felt that there was a need to link dioceses to support the work already going on. MU could provide support for families who host refugees and churches could provide safe spaces for refugee families. The AFIA budget could also be used to provide experiences to help refugees. A further meeting is planned for June/July. If you have any feedback or ideas about how MU can help practically and prayerfully in this humanitarian crisis, please Email communications@mothersunion.org

Queen's Jubilee

Her Majesty the Queen will become the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee and our nation will come together over a four-day Bank Holiday weekend to celebrate. She never ceases to impress with her dedication and commitment. She has promoted Christian values at home and abroad. Please pray for the Queen in her role as Patron of the Mothers' Union.

MUe

Clare Thomas is happy to bring a selection of cards and books out to branch meetings or coffee mornings. At just over £5 for 5 birthday cards, they represent very good value.
Phone Clare on 01473 832808

A Prayer for Ukraine O God of Mercy and Love, we pray for your Spirit's transforming power to be at work in the present situation of war in Ukraine. We ask for softening of hard hearts and shelter for frightened souls. Give us eyes and ears to perceive how we can offer help in the most appropriate way. 'We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you'' 2 Chronicles 20 v12. Gracious God, we cry out to you and ask for peace and safety for all those affected. In Jesus' name. Amen

Teach us obedience Lord - In every part of our lives - Ears to hear your word - Hands to do your work - Feet to walk your path. A heart for all your people -
A mouth to shout your praise - A childlike faith - Humility - Confidence that says -
To the possible and the impossible
I am the Lord's servant - May it be to me as you have said. Amen

With Our Best Wishes to You All this Easter – from St Eds. and Ips. MU Trustees