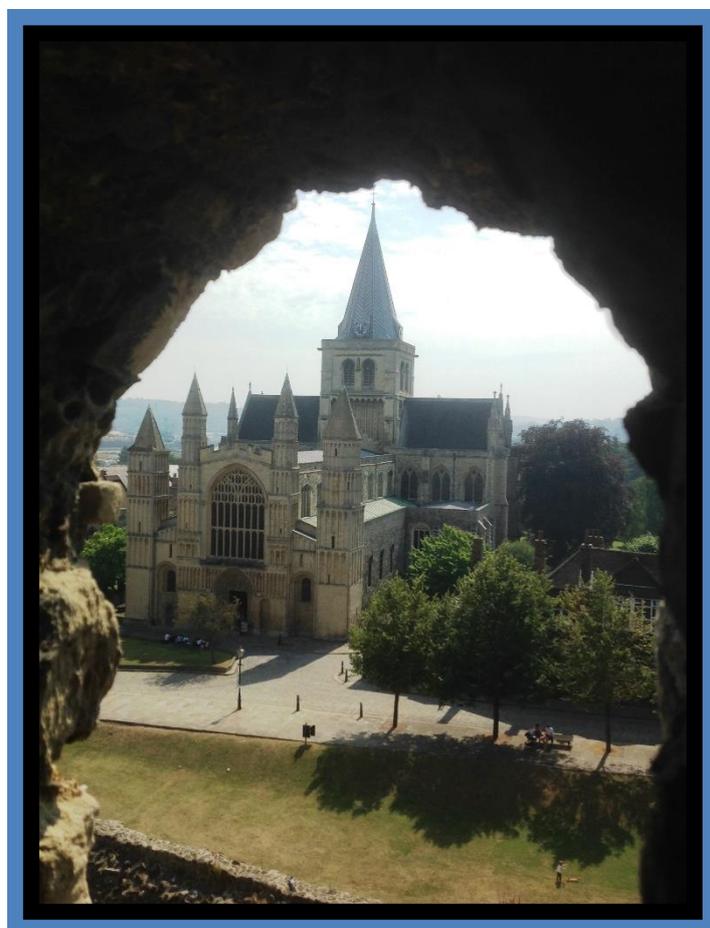


ROCHESTER DIOCESE MOTHERS' UNION



Annual Report 2015

Registered Charity No 249751

www.rochestermothersunion.co.uk

Rochester Diocese Mothers' Union Annual Report for 2015
United in Prayer

ROCHESTER DIOCESE MOTHERS' UNION

The Mothers' Union is a Christian Society within the Anglican Community

It has 4 million members in 83 countries

Vision: Our vision is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships

Aim and Purpose: To demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities world-wide through the nurture of the family in its many forms

Mission:

- To promote and support married life
- To encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children
- To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service
- To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children
- To help those whose family life has met with adversity

Values: The Mothers' Union is firmly rooted in a voluntary ethos. Its governance, leadership and programmes are driven by and undertaken through members around the world as they respond to God's call to faith and action

Beliefs:

- We believe in the value of each individual and their unique qualities
- We believe in the value of marriage and all faithful, loving family relationships
- We believe in the value of the family in its many forms as a source of love and support for individuals and the basis for a caring community

THE TRUSTEE BOARD

Diocesan President	Susan Brooker	020 8303 9975
Vice Presidents		
Bromley & Bexley	Julia Jamieson	01322 335 306
Rochester	Anne Williams	01322 862 551
Tonbridge	Vacant	
Elected Trustees		
Bromley & Bexley	Mary Margaret Yates	020 8402 1421
Rochester	Anne Sears	01634 409 113
Tonbridge	Lesley Marsh	01622 745 702
Unit Coordinators		
Finance and Diocesan Services	Susan Heads	01474 873 777
Action & Outreach	Wendy Swatridge	01634 814 165
Faith & Policy	Karen Forster-Pearce	01732 451 396
Communications	Vacant	
MUe	Gillian Vernon	01689 874 876
Appointed Trustee		
Training Officer	Judy Cuthbert	01892 826 243
In attendance		
Diocesan Administrator	Liz Carter	020 8467 8155
Diocesan Treasurer	Collina Kpendema	01322 405 272
Other Officers		
Diocesan Chaplain	Revd Kenneth Clark	01322 382 076
Archivist	Pam Thomas	01689 857 494

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When a believing person prays, great things happen. *James 5:16*

Our theme for 2015 was "United in Prayer". This develops the 2014 theme "Sowing the Future Together" by focussing on the centrality of prayer in the work of Mothers' Union across the world. As we continue to plan for the future and grow together prayer is at the heart of all we do.

Times may have changed since the founding of Mothers' Union in 1876 but we still live in a society which needs to know the love of God and we continue to reach out to our communities both through our prayer and our practical support to those around us.

The annual return for 2014 recorded xxx members in xx branches, including xx Diocesan and Indoor members who retain their link with a branch. It was encouraging to see a number of new members being enrolled during the year and where branches had to close for their members to remain as diocesan members.

This year we welcomed our new Overseas Diocesan Prayer links. Worldwide membership continues to flourish and prayer links established in the 1920's remain a source of encouragement and support for all our members today. Our new prayer links for Rochester Diocese Mothers' Union are in the Dioceses of Chattisgarh in India, Mbale in Uganda, Ndokwa and Zaria in Nigeria and Toliara in Madagascar. Our new Worldwide Links Project manager, Christine Baker, is endeavouring to make regular contact with the new links and we recently heard from Hannah Bello in Zaria Diocese thanking us for our newsletter saying it helped them to get to know their new Link Diocese. She asked that we continue to pray for one another.

Highlights of the year were:

- Working in partnership with Rochester Anglican Diocese supporting events such as the Diocesan Big Day Out in July, led by the Rev Canon Jean Kerr. We had a good many visitors to our Mothers' Union stand enabling us to showcase our work within our communities both locally and worldwide. Lots of interest was shown in our knitted teddies many of which found good homes amongst the children that visited. Also the Dean of Jerusalem, one of the keynote speakers, and his wife left with a teddy and a Mothers' Union bag of information.
- The Annual Prayer Pilgrimage on August 9th, Mary Sumner Day, was again very well attended. This year as the festival was on a Sunday members gathered for evensong at the Cathedral first then went on to enjoy tea in the beautiful gardens at Bishopscourt.
- An 'Inspired Day' was held in the autumn led by Action & Outreach Co-ordinator, Wendy Swatridge, and Vice President for Rochester Archdeaconry, Anne Williams. This was an opportunity to look at what members are achieving in their branches throughout the diocese. It was a time of encouragement and inspiration for new projects to be undertaken in the coming year.
- At our Autumn Members' Meeting in November members presented our outgoing President, Susan Brooker with a bouquet and tokens of appreciation for her time in office. Her calm, efficient and prayerful leadership has guided us through a difficult period with many key post holder vacancies on the Trustee board.

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Our members continue to fundraise enthusiastically for Mothers' Union supporting both home and worldwide projects and programmes for families and individuals in need. Our financial statement illustrates their generosity and faithfulness. I am grateful to all the members of the Trustee board and project leaders for the support and enthusiasm that they have given throughout the year.

Not least my love and thanks also to you, the members for entrusting the care of Rochester Diocese Mothers' Union to me as your elected Diocesan President from 2016. Your prayers and love will sustain me as we look forward with bright hope to the future, wherever God may lead us.

Our 2016 theme will be 'Celebrating Our Faith'. 2016 will be the 140th Anniversary Year for Mothers' Union globally and we look forward to partying with the opportunity to look back with thankfulness and forward with hope. In Rochester Diocese we will be seeking new ways to be a member and support families as our organisation has done since 1876.

See the website www.rochestermothersunion.co.uk for more information.

Julia Jamieson **President Rochester Diocese Mothers' Union.**

REPORTS FROM UNITS

Faith and Policy Unit

The Wave of Prayer in July focused on the new overseas links given to our Diocese - Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda, India and England. Our members, within their Branches, prayed for all members here and overseas for half an hour, on one of the three days given to them.

The Retreat in September was held at Penhurst Retreat Centre – conducted by Rev'd Paul Prentice from the Benefice of The Crays. Five members attended and the Diocesan President attended for a Quiet Day. This was a very interesting Spiritual Journey with a venue giving lots of areas for peace and reflection.

The Prayer Pilgrimage to Rochester Cathedral, on Mary Sumner Day - 9th August, involved members travelling from their Church, stopping at other Churches *en route* and finished with Choral Evensong. This event was very well supported by our members and Cathedral visitors.

Faith & Policy Watch, a document sent out monthly via e-mail from MSH, to the Faith and Policy Co-ordinator to forward onto members. This informs members of prayer needs within the Organisation.

A few members participated in the 'Sixteen Days of Action on Gender Violence'.

My thanks go to Sue Morgan - for coordinating the Emergency Prayer Circle and, Helen McCulloch - for coordinating the Social Policy. They have both put in a lot of hard work and energy keeping our members involved whether through e-mail, telephone or letter - with prayers required and consultation papers to be completed and, returned to MSH.

My thanks also go to my fellow Trustees and, Branch members for their continued support shown, and given to me during the year.

Karen Forster-Pearce Faith & Policy Coordinator

Action and Outreach Unit

This year has been an interesting year, as I have visited many branches and met many members to speak about the new links we have been given by MSH.

Projects

AFIA

Karen and Alyson have continued to lead the work in arranging holidays for people in need of a break. This year they have arranged five holidays, and one family who applied too late for a holiday to be booked for this year, will be carried over to 2016. The average cost of a holiday has been £900, and a welcome box of provisions has been £35.

Worldwide Projects and Overseas Links

As Iris retired from this post at the end of last year due to ill health, Christine Baker has taken on the role of Overseas Link correspondent. Iris has continued to keep up her links with people she has got to know well from our old links, and I have kept in touch with Agnes Mkoko.

Christine has not had an easy task, as she has taken over at a time when MSH decided that we should all start with new links. At the moment we have sent out various information to them: a copy of Families First, a copy of the RDMU newsletter, a copy of the Wave of Prayer service sheet, as well as emails and a Christmas and Easter card. Please pray for Christine and this work, as at present she has only built up a relationship with Hannah Bello the DP of Zaria, as the other links have not responded. (I originally heard from Toliara in Madagascar but nothing has been heard from them since.)

MUCH

Julia has had to give up the role she played in starting up this group and publication because of the amount of work she had as Vice President for Bromley and Bexley, and now as President of Rochester Diocese. This has meant that Heather Sinclair has continued in charge of this area of work. She continues to produce the quarterly e-magazine and meetings for the members.

PAP (Passionate about Parenting)

Unfortunately we have no trained trainers for this course, as one person completed the course and was not certified and the other did not complete the training.

Women's Refuge in Strood

The number of children dropped as the residents changed, so members have not been required on such a regular basis, but a good link has been made.

Help for Syrian Refugees

Gill Newman had to distance herself from the group she was working with, so the Link has stopped. However Jean Kerr collected items for the migrants in Calais which MU members supported.

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L for L (Loving for Life)

Nobody has expressed an interest in training for this work.

Prison Work

We still have one member who helps at one of the prisons, but nobody new has been recruited for the other opportunities offered last year.

Mission to Seafarers

Thank you to all those who have knitted for this cause; I have posted three large posting boxes over this year, filled with the items made, and have about half another box waiting to be sent when a box is full. Each box sent has been sent to the headquarters and they then distribute them to ports in need of them. Each box has been acknowledged by a return of letter. Thank you also for those who have knitted women's hats, as there are some women seafarers, but by far the majority are men.

Other knitted Items

Teddies are now being sent to the fostering service to be given to children who go into care, often with nothing of their own, and they are something to be taken with them when they are moved either back home, to another foster home, or to be adopted. (When the social worker received them she had tears in her eyes when she saw them).

Medway hospital's maternity department have been very grateful for the premature baby hats, but don't need other baby clothes.

Twiddle muffs and quilts have been gratefully received by people living with dementia. Julia Burton Jones (the Diocesan Advisor for work with people living with dementia) was also informed about the MU role in this area, at an event she spoke at.

WMF (World Mission Forum)

I have continued to attend meetings with this group. We decided to highlight our organisations with a prayer event held in each of the Archdeaconries supported by the Archdeacon of each. The archdeacons distributed our publicity as well as speaking at some point in the event. The Tonbridge event was on a stormy evening and had no attendees, but the Rochester and Bromley and Bexley events were well attended with over 50 people attending each. We are preparing to repeat these events in 2016 at different churches in each archdeaconry.

Events in 2014

We looked to produce a stall at the Food and Drink Festival in Chatham, but despite following the website, council and tourist information centre leads we failed to get any information from the organisers.

The Diocesan Big Day Out was organised by Jean Kerr who originally asked us to run a crèche at the event. After debate we agreed to do it, however there was a mix up and another group was given this role. Jean was contacted and it was agreed that we could do an MU stall. Mary Margaret lent us her gazebo to hold it in. We ended up with a prime placement for our stall, next to the bishops and senior clergy tent, and a place which looked towards the tent with the staged events. We had a busy day handing out MU information, MU balloons for the children and selling some of our teddies, while answering many peoples' questions about the

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MU. We even got a small mention in the LINK's report of the day, a shame it was only for our smiles and balloons!

Inspired

Julia, Anne Williams and I planned to do an event in each archdeaconry, so more people could experience this work. Unfortunately we had no take-up from Tonbridge archdeaconry and only 6 people showing an interest in Bromley and Bexley so both of these events had to be cancelled before we lost any money for the places we had booked. The final event was arranged for the week after the Autumn Members' Meeting at St Georges Gravesend, to ensure people would be in full knowledge of the event. Some people felt we had made a mistake doing this, as they could not turn out for a meeting two weeks running. We had 12 people and Susan Brooker attend, (including the Canterbury President elect and one not yet a member who has now joined) and on the day Julia was unwell so Anne and myself did the presentation of the material. The feedback at the end of the day was positive but one person said it was a shame more people hadn't attended.

St Justus Christmas Tree Festival

I again produced an MU Tree as it raises the profile of MU in the area. We had over 800 people from all areas of the community attend over the weekend. The tree then goes to a family in the community who wouldn't be able to afford a tree for their family.

I know a lot of members produce items for people in their local community and I thank you for the work done by you in promoting MU.

Wendy Swatridge **Action and Outreach Co-ordinator**

MUe

Thank you everyone for ordering and buying from MUe over the last year.

We sold 200 diaries and Christmas cards sold out. Branch Leaders are asked to collect money first when ordering 2017 diaries. Delivery will be in June, selling from the end of July/August.

I hope every member has read through Catalogue 21. There are many new cards and gifts for sale.

The total sale from MUe for 2015 was £2,768.

Gillian Vernon **MUe Representative**

