

MU member Sue Poole, was deeply moved when a speaker from the Norwich based 'Baby Bank' appeared on Look East last Autumn and shared the difficulties of young parents struggling to clothe their babies and toddlers with the rising costs involved in daily living.

With the backing of her incumbent the Rev. Tracey Jessop and her branch of the Mothers' Union, Sue established a twice weekly Baby and Young Children's Clothes Swap at Fakenham Parish Church.



To launch the project, Sue visited Charity shops using her own money and bought suitable items for young families to choose from. Fellow MU members from Fakenham branch also purchased baby grows and larger clothing to donate and the staff at the local Hain Daniels factory gathered together items from within their own families and friends providing a wide range of clothing. The rails and boxes of freshly laundered donations are available to parents at the Carer and Toddler group every Monday morning and again on Thursday Market Day mornings.

It is proving very popular and Sue is getting to know and stand alongside regulars who are gradually letting down their guard and chatting freely with her. Sue is easy to talk to. With a ready smile and a warm welcome to anyone visiting the Swap Shop, she hastens to reassure them that there is no charge, and if they have nothing to donate in exchange it really doesn't matter, they can take what they need. Outgrown good condition clothes/shoes range from babies through to 10yr olds, and are sorted and laundered by Sue and other members of the branch before being put out on display. (EMN)

Presidents' Letter

Dear fellow members, I started to write this letter very early in Lent and here I am hoping all our members had a very happy and blessed Easter. I hope that Lent was a valuable time in your faith journey and that Spring and Easter are bringing joy, giving us hope for the future.

Early February was a difficult time for me. My husband, Ian, had a stroke, alarming but fortunately very minor. Other family issues since then led to my feeling life was perhaps not going very smoothly this year – I'm sure you have had these ups and downs as well. It is at times like these that I realise how many people are there for us, from 999 and the ambulance responders, so many hospital Staff – our families, Church communities and many, many more – lovely people who raise us up. I give thanks to God for every one of them.

We know that Mothers' Union has been going through a rough time over the last few years. We are recovering, but for full recovery we rely on our faithful members for support. Members who share a passion for the Mothers' Union and the social changes we achieve all over the world. I give thanks for all members, those who take on active roles, be it leading prayers or making tea at branch meetings, giving of their time to pray at home or volunteering to be a Trustee. We cannot survive without each one of you. I thank you all!

One morning recently a Church friend came to me with a big smile and asked if she could join Mothers' Union. She has also been going through a tough time and I give thanks that she has turned to the Church and to the Mothers' Union for friendship and support. Our members must be there for all, through the rough times as well as the smooth. That is the 'Christian Care' of our strapline.

"All this day O Lord, let us touch as many lives as possible for thee. And every life we touch, do thou by thy Spirit quicken. Whether through the words we speak, the prayers we breathe or the lives we live, Amen".

Adapted from Mary Sumner's personal prayer.

Felicity

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Sandra Bendall, a committed member, who worked tirelessly alongside Sandra Sacks organising the AFIA project. Also the Rev Gerald Epps who was our webmaster for several years. We give thanks to God for their commitment and years of service to MU. Please pray for their families at this time.



Many of you who shop via Amazon Smile will know that the company is ceasing donations to

multiple charities. However the 'easyfundraising' site we joined some 10 years ago is still running and we have received substantial donations totalling £1,006.67 over the years,

I admit I haven't used it for several years, but having discovered there is now an 'easyfundraising' app to download on my mobile I have found a whole new system that is so very easy to use. I learned from the site the amount of donations received over the past 10 years and the fact that I have personally helped raise £31.69. and that we have 57 supporters.

We can shop with all the big retailers via the site, also book holidays, insure our homes and cars, buy office equipment, train tickets, book hotels, pet foods and much more and it does not cost us an extra penny!

How to download the app? Simply go to Playstore on your mobile and type in the search box 'easyfundraising' (all one word) and download. It is extremely easy, alternatively you can search for it via Google.

Eunice Norwood

OUR VALUE:

A well known speaker started off a conference for young people by holding up a £20 note. "Who would like this £20 note?" Hands started going up. He then proceeded to crumple the note up, and asked "Who still wants it?" Still the hands went up in the air.

"OK" he replied, "What if I do this?" And he dropped the note and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. Smiling he asked "Now who wants it?" Still the hands went into the air. "My friends", he said "today you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth £20".

There are many times in our lives, when we and the MU are dropped, crumpled, and ground down by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, *you will never lose your value*. You are special, created by God and loved by him – Don't ever forget it! *(Author unknown)*

Meet Our New Chaplain the Rev Adrian Aubrey-Jones.



Hello! I have been asked to write an article for the Angles magazine to introduce myself. My name is Adrian Aubrey-Jones and I live in Dersingham. I am married to Anthea who has been a member of the Mothers Union for many years and is currently Branch Treasurer. Anthea is following a family tradition as her mother was a long-standing member of the Mothers Union and also served as Branch Treasurer. We have a grown-up son, Philip who works as a live-in carer and is married to Neia who is Brazilian. We have three grandchildren and also a great grandson living in Brazil.

I was ordained in 2007 and served my Curacy here in Dersingham. In 2010 I was appointed Team Vicar in the Dereham Team Ministry and we lived in a new five bed roomed Vicarage in Swanton Morley. In 2016 after I retired, we moved back to Dersingham.

I helped in the Dersingham Benefice on a 'Permission to Officiate' basis before being re-licensed as Honorary Assistant Priest by the Bishop of Lynn.

Prior to Ordination, I worked as a VAT Officer in Birmingham and then in Kings Lynn after we moved to Norfolk in 1986.

We both enjoy walking and are members of the National Trust. My personal interests are reading and listening to different genres of music.

I am looking forward to being your Chaplain and meeting many of you at different functions and events. *Rev. Adrian.*

Good News At Last.

We have appointed an Administrator for our office in Diocesan House.

She will not start work quite yet and will need time to discover the strange ways of the Mothers' Union!

Members will be informed when the office is open for business as usual.

Around & About The Diocese

Lowestoft: Following a service celebrating Candlemas, we had a talk from one of our members. John is a Church Army Officer and at one time a Franciscan in a community. He spoke of his time as manager of a Christian Residential Home in Lowestoft. It brought back memories of the time when MU would hold a meeting once a year in the residents sitting room. One or two residents were members, and afterwards we would go around and chat to the residents who always looked forward to our visits. Sadly we did not continue our visits after the home changed hands. When John worked in the home he was not an MU member but he was enrolled a few years ago. His deputy manager at that time also comes along to our meetings. Perhaps moving out into other venues occasionally is something we should consider for future growth? *Mary Carr*

Swaffham: Members enjoyed an excellent talk from Sean and Vanessa from Norfolk Blood Bikes last month and would highly recommend them as speakers. Sean arrived on his motor bike which we all had a chance to admire. It was also



lovely to have three members from South Wootton MU join us!

Norfolk Blood Bikes (*all volunteers*) do amazing work transporting urgent blood, plasma, test samples and medical supplies between our 3 hospitals, plus on occasions collecting from Addenbrookes out of hours. They can be contacted on 01842827909 (Stuart Scott) or email Stuart.Scott@norfolkbloodbikes.org.

North & South Wootton:

Members were delighted to share in the presentation of a long service certificate at All Saints, North Wootton to fellow member Norma Jordon marking her 65 years of commitment to Mothers' Union.

Pictured: Rev Swinton presenting certificate to Norma. Congratulations Norma, we admire your loyalty.

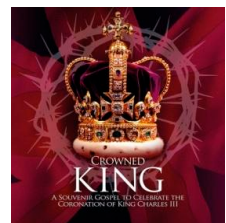


High Oak, Attleborough and Little Melton branches have been working closer together and sharing meetings and speakers. This has been both successful and enjoyable so far and it has been good to meet new people. In High Oak itself, our members tend to be the catalysts for a number of local initiatives but would not achieve what we do without the help of all manner of people who support us, give generously in cash or kind and encourage what we do. They are our unofficial “Friends”. In 2023 we have resumed the pre-Covid pleasure of eating together. On Shrove Tuesday, members and guests met for Midday Prayers and a pancake lunch and had a very enriching (and sustaining) gathering. More recently we held a Lent Lunch in our local Pub: Wicklewood Cherry Tree, where landlady Julie always makes us very welcome, charges nothing and helps in any way she can.

Thirty people - members and local residents - came and shared a totally **non-frugal** “Lent Lunch” and, in between courses of a lunch put together by a team of members, listened to local speaker Arnie McConnell who heads up Wymondham Community Outreach Project. This is an initiative that helps local people in need and High Oak branch has decided to link with the work being done there and help in any way we can. We were delighted to welcome members from Little Melton and Attleborough to this event. Over £220 was donated for lunches and an array of food, toiletries and other items was donated for Arnie to distribute, so our work together has got off to a flying start.



As well as our own programme of events, “MU and Friends”, as we now call ourselves, are heading up a Community Day in Wicklewood on Sunday 7th May, in Celebration of King Charles’ Coronation. We have linked with the pub for that day and a whole array of events are happening during the day ranging from breakfast, tea and Fish and Chip supper with a royal quiz at the pub to a Musical Reflection and Celebration in the Village Hall with The High Oak Music Group and Friends followed by a Family picnic and Ceilidh dance. All good fun and we hope to support the community in a day to remember. We are also looking into the possibility of purchasing copies of the Special Coronation edition of Matthew’s Gospel to give away .



Midday Prayers at Norwich Cathedral

On the first Thursday of each month we meet in the Jesus Chapel at 12.00 noon to say and sing Midday Prayers. This service is always in the Cathedral programme of services and we have a little sign board just outside the Chapel saying we are the Mothers' Union. The service is also announced by the Chaplain on duty when he/she says the Lord's Prayer at 12.00. There is a core congregation of about 12 members at present attending regularly together with members of the Branch who are leading the service. Believe it or not Midday Prayers actually started in 2013 and we have served in this way monthly without a break for 10 years! (except for Covid) A wonderful commitment by grass roots members which I hope will continue for another 10 years or more!

The Rota this year you will see has 2 spaces – in July and August

May 4 th .	Wroxham Suzanne Jones
June 1 st	Old Catton Elizabeth Fletcher
July 6 th .	Volunteers needed
August 3 rd .	Volunteers needed
September 7 th .	Lakenham Marguerite Philips
October 5 th	Eaton
November 2 nd	Dereham and District Sheila Hanmer
December 7 th	Trustees

Do please consider if your Branch would like to take part in this very valuable affirmation of our presence. I have all the necessary information to help construct a service and also plenty of examples of services that have taken place. I hope to be at the next members day but you can always contact me on 01953 605030 or e-mail kay.dorling@gmail.com *Kay Dorling*

The Mothers' Union Shop: May I encourage you to buy items from the MU shop. It helps fund MU projects at home and overseas as all profit goes towards our charity work. Also, a percentage comes to the Norwich diocese to help our own funds. The quality of items is good and everything is very reasonably priced. I can post a catalogue to you on request. If you are unable to order online email me (sheila.tuffield@btinternet.com) or telephone me 01603 419896) and I will place an order and get it to you. Any postage will be charged. Cheques to be made payable to Mothers' Union Norwich Diocese. I will have ware for sale on Members Day at St Luke's. Sheila Tuffield. (MU Enterprises Rep)

Refugee Resettlement Project Thanks to your generosity the project continues. We buy appropriate bedding for those vulnerable families who choose to come to Norfolk. They flee danger in their home countries and foreign camps, and choose to come here, having been vetted by the UNHCR and the Home Office, which can involve an uncomfortable wait. Their beds are made up by us to look special for each family member and this is not only much appreciated, but also means the family feels more welcome, begin to feel at home and ready to settle into life in Norfolk. We've been running this project in partnership with the County Council's award-winning 'People From Abroad' Team for 6 years now!

As in the past, the Bishop has kindly invited all refugees to a Garden Party, through the social work team. This summer Mothers' Union has been invited as we often are, but it was suggested that this time we might set up an attraction. So to follow on with the 'Happy Family Bedtime' theme, we plan to offer picture books suitable for little people and new readers. Books with few words and lots of pictures to recognize and discover. (We are **not** thinking of Roald Dahl, David Walliams or 'The Diary of a Wimpy Kid'.) We will have a little display about who we are as MU and what we do in choosing their bedding and there will be a few MU members to talk, listen and read books. The books will all be given to refugee families.

Therefore we need to collect a lot of **babies' and young children's picture and story books**, with simple words or little rhymes - this is where you come in! They need not be new but in good condition, or you and your friends might like to give a new book or two that you know will be well-used. Remember The Very Hungry Caterpillar, the stories by Shirley Hughes and the lovely recent ones by Julia Donaldson? Or baby board books about colours, numbers or objects the youngsters come across, with words in their new language here. Perhaps you have family members who have outgrown their very young books and would like to give their best baby and pre-school books to new families who will use them to learn the spoken English language together.

The Garden Party is in late July after our MU Council meeting on 12th, so it would be ideal to bring a few books with you to Norwich then. Even better, you will meet Simon the Team Manager of the social work team, who is coming to speak to us about their work in the afternoon. I look forward to seeing you then, but do telephone or email me before if you have any questions.

Jenny Holcombe 01603 452429 email: jenny@juniper2008.plus.com

September 26th FESTIVAL SERVICE September 26th

'CARING FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS'

Keep the date free - September 26th - Norwich Cathedral, from 12noon.

We look forward to welcoming all members to our Cathedral Festival Service.
(Have you written September 26th in your diary yet?)

The 12noon start is for 'Picnics in the Cloisters', followed by Banner Making in the South Transept. We are planning the largest recycled (95%) Mothers' Union banner ever! Plus there will be a display of Mothers' Union books and materials from years gone by and an MUE stall for all your 2023 cards, bags and badges.

Our Preacher at the 2:30 Service will be the Bishop of Norwich, Bishop Graham Usher, who is the Church of England's 'Environment Champion'. He will pick up the Caring for our Neighbours theme in Caring for our Environment – so important in care for our neighbours around the world.

We regret there will be NO Branch Banner procession this year. After a close call in 2022 we have decided the banner procession is a safety risk which we cannot take for the time being. If you wish to bring your banner – with its stand, please let us know in advance and they will be displayed around the service area.

Wednesday 31st May: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sprowston Branch invites you to a 'MOTHERS' UNION TOGETHER DAY' for worship and companionship. The theme will be Prayer and led by Revd. Heather Wright. It will be held at St. Mary and St. Margaret's Church, Church Lane, Sprowston, NR7 8AU. The surroundings offer plenty of places to sit or explore in quiet times, including a nearby woodland walk. The event is free. There will be a collection for Mothers' Union Funds Please bring a packed lunch. Hot and cold drinks will be provided. It would help if you can let us know you will be coming by phoning Sheila Tuffield on 01603 419896 or by email at sheila.tuffield@btinternet.com. However, it is not essential, and it is okay to just turn up.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRADWELL BRANCH Celebrating their 102nd Birthday

The bells rang out from St. Nicholas' Church, Bradwell on Monday 27th March calling people to join in the service celebrating their Mothers' Union's 120th Birthday. Around 60 people attended the service including friends from around the Diocese, members in the Waveney and Yare group as well as our own members and friends. We were delighted to welcome Felicity Randall, our Diocesan President.



Rev. Steve Deall, vicar of Bradwell, led the service and in his talk spoke about the Mothers' Union building on the past and moving into the future with confidence, remembering the words God spoke to Moses in Joshua chapter 1: 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'

Two new members were admitted during the service.



Tea was served in the Hall afterwards and a beautiful birthday cake had been made for the occasion, with the Bradwell Mothers' Union banner in icing as the centre piece. Felicity Randall and Doreen Hall, the Branch leader, were both presented with bouquets and thanked for all the work they do. It was a truly joyful celebration of a memorable event!

DID YOU KNOW? There is a Prayer line at Mary Sumner House. Submitted prayers are included with Midday Prayers in the Chapel. To fill in your prayer request form contact - www.mothersunion.org/what-we-do/faith-and-prayer/send-us-a-prayer

Diary Dates:

- June 7th** Trustees Meeting 11am - 2pm Diocesan House
June 20th Bishop's Strawberry Tea (Time TBA) Bishop's Garden Norwich
- July 12th** Diocesan Council 10 - 2pm St Luke's Norwich
- Aug 9th** Mary Sumner Day
- Sept 13th** Trustees Meeting 11am - 2pm Diocesan House
Sept 22nd Annual Gathering of MU York Details TBA
Sept 26th Diocesan Festival Service Picnic lunches and Activities in the Cloister/South Transept from 12noon - Service at 2.30pm
- October** **Week beginning 9th** - Members Days around the Diocese with Times/Venues to be agreed.
- Nov 8th** Trustees Meeting 11am - 2pm Diocesan House

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Please note. *With the lack of an administrator at the moment the office is not manned, messages may be left or you can email and it will be dealt with as soon as possible by visiting Trustees. Urgent issues should be referred direct to Felicity for the time being*