

MSH Member Update – February 2025 Edition

Dear Members,

Welcome to your February edition of your monthly MSH Update.

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1. Happy New Year message from the CEO, Bev Jullien!

I hope you had a joyful and refreshing time with your loved ones over the holiday season. As we step into this new year, the team at Mary Sumner House is energised and ready to support you and your members as we embark on this fresh Triennium together.

To those continuing in your roles; **thank you** for your dedication and service. And to those stepping into leadership for the first time; **welcome, and thank you** for answering the call to such an important role. Your commitment ensures that Mothers' Union continues to thrive and transform lives.

Exciting Times Ahead!

There is so much to look forward to this year as we work toward our shared mission. And let's not forget - **our 150th Anniversary is just around the corner in 2026!** Preparations are already underway to mark this incredible milestone, and we can't wait to celebrate it with you all.

A Few Practical Updates

- **Sharing Contact Information:** Thank you for updating your addresses so we could send out this newsletter in January. To ensure smooth communication, we would like to share emails and phone numbers with Provincial Presidents. If you are uncomfortable with this, please let Atim know by the end of the month.

- **Corrections Needed?** If we've sent this to the wrong address or person, please notify Atim as soon as possible so we can correct it.

Team Changes at Mary Sumner House

- **A Fond Farewell:** Sarah Button-Stephens has moved on from Mothers' Union. Adam Sach is currently recruiting for a new **Head of Communications and Marketing**; in the meantime, Adam will handle communications directly.
- **Welcome Back, Steph Nunn!** We are delighted to share that Steph will return in early February following recovery from major surgery last year. Her resilience and dedication are truly inspiring, and we look forward to having her back.

As we embrace 2025 with boldness, inspired by faith, empowered by love, and committed to making a difference, let us move forward together with hope, determination, and the spirit of service that has defined Mothers' Union for nearly 150 years. Together, as one united movement, we can achieve incredible things in the year to come.

Here's to a fruitful and impactful 2025!

Warmest regards,

Bev Jullien
CEO
Mothers' Union

2. Exciting New Governance Training for MU!

We're thrilled to announce a fantastic opportunity for all MU leaders to enhance their skills and knowledge! An introductory session on Charity Governance and Trusteeship will be live on the resource hub by the end of January, with associated supporting materials. This will be followed by a leadership session ahead of Easter. Additionally, a small number of in-person training events will be held around the country after Easter. Full details will be circulated upon Steph Nunn's return to work.

Coming Soon:

- **Online Training:** An introductory session on **Charity Governance and Trusteeship in an MU context** will be live on our Resource Hub by the end of January! This engaging online course will be packed with valuable information and accompanied by helpful supporting materials.
- **Leadership Focus:** A dedicated session on **Leadership in an MU context** will be held before Easter, providing you with the tools and insights to lead your MU with confidence and effectiveness.
- **In-Person Sessions:** For those who thrive in a face-to-face setting, a limited number of in-person training events will be held around the country after Easter.

Stay Tuned!

Full details, including dates, times, and locations, will be circulated shortly. We can't wait to share these exciting opportunities with you!

3. Updates for Lent, Lady Day, and Mothering Sunday

As we journey through this season of reflection and renewal, we're excited to share some inspiring opportunities and resources to deepen your faith and strengthen your connection with our global MU community.

LENT 2025 – Living Hope

This year's Lent theme, Living Hope, invites us to embrace the transformative power of Christ's resurrection. Even in life's challenging moments, we are reminded of the unwavering hope we have in Him.

To support you on this Lenten journey, we've created a collection of inspiring resources to guide your reflection and prayer. These materials are designed to help you connect more deeply with God, the Living Hope who sustains us through every season. **Explore our Lenten resources here:**

<https://www.mothersunion.org/news/welcome-lent>

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th, and we're honoured to have our Worldwide President leading Midday Prayers to mark the start of this sacred season. Join us on Facebook to be part of this uplifting experience:

Lady Day – Celebrating the Feast of Annunciation

Did you know that Lady Day is deeply rooted in the Mothers' Union tradition? Observing this special day on March 25th is recommended in our constitution! This year, we're delighted to share updated resources to help you celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation meaningfully.

Discover our latest materials and learn more about the importance of Lady Day to Mothers' Union here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/news/why-lady-day-important-mothers-union>

Mothering Sunday – March 30th

This Mothering Sunday, we reflect on the theme of "The Gift of Peace", a powerful and timely message in uncertain times.

We're thrilled to offer a special sermon along with additional resources to help you celebrate this day in a way that nurtures and uplifts your community. Access them here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/mothering-sunday-resources>

A call to action for our MU members! Reach out to your clergy and share these resources as a way to support their ministry. Together, let's highlight the importance

of peace, nurturing, and the powerful role of Mothering Sunday in strengthening our communities.

4. Thriving with Non-Traditional Mothers' Union Branches

At Mothers' Union, we are committed to growing and diversifying our group network to reflect the evolving needs of our communities. Non-traditional styles of groups offer fresh, flexible ways to engage members and make a meaningful impact.

In this February edition of MSH Update, Kathryn Anderson, Branch the immediate past Provincial President for Canterbury, shares an inspiring story from Chichester Diocese that highlights how stepping away from convention can foster a thriving, inclusive branch. Her approach demonstrates how innovation can complement our cherished traditions and expand our mission.

A Fresh Approach to Mothers' Union Branch Life By Kathryn Anderson

In March 2016, my journey as Diocesan President (DP) for the Chichester Diocese began with a commissioning service at the magnificent Chichester Cathedral. At the time, my husband and I were active members of St Mary's MU branch in Old Town, Eastbourne. Little did I know that this new role would lead us to create a transformative and non-traditional MU branch in our Evangelical Parish.



On September 24, 2017, with encouragement from our retired Vicar and his wife, who had become intrigued by the MU's mission, we established a new branch in our parish. Seven members were enrolled that day, including the Vicar and his wife, while three of us transferred from other branches. We marked the occasion with a shared lunch that welcomed local MU members, setting the tone for the open and inclusive spirit of our gatherings.

Breaking from Tradition

Unlike traditional MU branches, our branch meets informally, often around food—whether it's a bring-and-share lunch after Thursday Communion or afternoon tea on a Sunday. This relaxed format fosters a sense of community, extending a warm welcome to all members of the church family.

Global Day has been a cornerstone of our branch activities for three years. The MU online resources have been invaluable, helping us organise impactful services and create weatherproof “No more 1 in 3” banners. Our partnership with local East Sussex Refuges has been particularly meaningful, from donating Global Day collections for gift cards to collecting toiletries and sanitary products year-round since November 2023.

Creative Initiatives for Local Impact

Our branch's activities reflect our commitment to both local and global causes. Highlights include:

Clothes Exchange: *A fun, eco-friendly way to support each other.*

Couples' Evenings: *Featuring supper and marriage enrichment videos from “Care for the Family.”*

Mother's Day Cakes: *Donations supported the “Make a Mother's Day” appeal.*

Rise Up & Modern Day Slavery (MDS) Awareness: *Posters in church restrooms promote awareness of domestic abuse and modern-day slavery.*

We've also responded to specific needs, such as providing household goods for a mother and baby moving into their own home and assisting a survivor of domestic abuse with children.

In 2024, we introduced monthly open breakfast meetings, beginning with guest speaker Revd Sue Foster, MU member, who shared her work as one of ten MDS Ambassadors for the Diocese. These gatherings have sparked curiosity and

enthusiasm, with attendees like Daphne, who became a member after hearing about MU's mission at one of our events.

In June, we earned the Bronze Award for the "Rise Up" campaign, becoming the first branch in our diocese to do so. Our sights are now set on achieving the Silver Award, supported by Healthy Bible Study materials, Bystander Webinar and a steadily growing membership.

A Welcoming and Growing Community

Our open approach has attracted new members like Jess, Steffi, and others, who were enrolled during a special service in August. The momentum has continued with three more coming forward to join, inspired by our breakfast meetings and guest speakers.

Raising awareness about big issues like domestic abuse and modern-day slavery has been pivotal in our branch's growth. Events like our Global Day march, complete with banners and a poignant three-minute silence, have turned heads and sparked important conversations in our community.

The Heart of Our Success

At its core, our branch thrives because it blends tradition with innovation. By welcoming everyone—MU members and non-members alike—and addressing pressing social issues, we've created a dynamic, growing community that embodies the heart of Mothers' Union.

Our journey shows that when we embrace flexibility and openness, we can breathe new life into time-honoured institutions and make a tangible difference in the world.

5. Exciting News: A New Mothers' Union Branch Blossoms in Chad!

We are delighted to announce the birth of a new Mothers' Union branch in Chad! In December 2024, twelve enthusiastic women from the Anglican Church in Chad gathered at St Paul's Church in N'Djamena to embark on this exciting journey.

Led by Mme Felicité Ndoubayidi, Head of the Women's Ministry Department, the launch meeting was a vibrant occasion filled with worship, insightful Bible study, and valuable guidance from Bishop Anthony Ball.



The group elected Mme Dezoumbe Ignadang as their N'Djamena Deanery representative, demonstrating their commitment to leadership and collaboration.

This is just the beginning! The group is already planning to establish another branch in southern Chad, where there is strong interest, particularly among Nigerian church members. This proactive approach demonstrates their vision for a thriving and impactful Mothers' Union presence across the country. Bishop Anthony Ball has expressed his enthusiasm for this significant development and plans to formally commission a Diocesan Branch President at the upcoming Synod in February.

This exciting news follows the recent establishment of a Mothers' Union branch in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, further highlighting the continued global growth of this vital movement. It is particularly heartwarming to see how this new branch in Chad is already prioritizing crucial work such as peace and reconciliation within both the church and the wider society.

Let's celebrate and pray for this vibrant new branch in Chad as they begin their journey of faith, service, and transformation. Together, we're building a stronger, united Mothers' Union across the globe!

6. MU Live Submissions

A huge thank you to those responsible for completing MU Live on behalf of your dioceses and provinces! Your efforts are greatly appreciated, and the information you provide through this system helps us share the incredible work and message of the Mothers' Union far and wide.

We encourage you to continue submitting updates through MU Live. If you have any questions or need assistance with the system, please reach out to Jeanette in the Global Programmes team at: Development@mothersunion.org.

Thank you for your continued support!

Membership Team

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