

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Diocese of Bath & Wells



A bit about us ...

mubathandwells.org

This booklet aims to tell you about the development of the Mothers Union since its foundation in 1876 and what we believe and represent in the twenty-first century.

Madeline Hellier

Diocesan President

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Mary Sumner, the founder of the Mothers Union and herself a mother of three, was all too aware of the burdens and responsibilities of parenting and of the feelings of inadequacy that could swamp young mothers.

When her daughter, Margaret, had her first child, Mary took the initial steps in founding a society for the support of women in their role as mothers. Mary recognised that good parenting was more than providing for the physical needs of the child, and she believed that the primary responsibility was to raise children in the love of God.

In 1896 the Central Council of Mothers Union was formed and members agreed objectives and a central vision that marriage, parenting and prayer were key to the future of families.

The range and depth of work in the twenty-first century far exceeds Mary Sumner's original vision of a circle of prayer upholding family life. There are now 4 million members in 84 countries across the world.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF TODAY?

Mothers Union members are not all mothers, or even all women! Single, married, divorced, widowed, parents, grandparents or young adults just beginning to express their social conscience belong. Anyone who supports the aims and objectives of the Mothers Union can become a member. Everyone pays an annual subscription to support the work and cover administrative costs.

OUR VISION

The vision of the Mothers Union is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships.

The Mothers Union aims to demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms.

The mission of the Mothers Union is

- 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

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.

Mothers Union members believe in

- The value of each individual and their unique qualities
- The value of relationships. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your souls and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself."
- 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



BRANCHES

Branch Membership

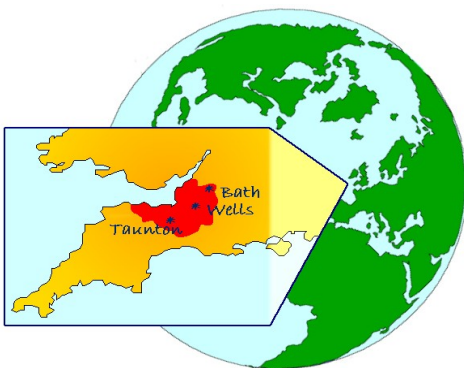
There are 60 branches across the diocese of Bath and Wells. Members meet for prayer, worship and fellowship and to hear speakers on various subjects concerned with out work. Branches promote the aims and objectives of the Mothers Union and plan activities to meet local needs.

Diocesan Membership

For people who cannot attend meetings there is Diocesan Membership. These members receive regular newsletters to keep them up to date with developments and activities.

Indoor Membership

There is also Indoor Membership for those who are unable to attend Branch meetings through ill health and these members also receive regular newsletters and are visited at home by their local Branch members.



DIOCESAN PROJECTS

There are a variety of social projects in the diocese including:

- **Child Contact Centres** which provide neutral ground for separated families to meet and we now have two running in the diocese of Bath and Wells - in Frome and in Nailsea and Clevedon. Both are accredited with the National Association of Child Contact Centres
- **Away From It All** (otherwise known as AFIA) provides holidays for families who would not otherwise be able to go away together
- **Knitted Garments**. are made by many members. Bonnets, blankets, booties and angel pockets are supplied to the premature baby units in hospitals in Bath, Taunton, Weston super Mare and Yeovil. Baby clothes are also provided for Teenage Pregnancy Units. Overknee blankets are knitted for nursing homes
- **Sewing** baby gowns and quilted cot covers which are used in all four hospitals in the neo-natal units
- **Woman's Aid** supports Women's Refuges in an all year round commitment involving sending foodstuffs, cleaning materials and little luxuries and gifts
- **Parenting Courses** with fully trained and accredited leaders are held across the Diocese
- **Student Cookbooks** contain simple recipes and useful household information and are sold cheaply at Freshers' Week at Bath and Bath Spa University and Taunton College
- **Story Sacks** containing books, toys and games, are given to schools and churches to help tell Bible stories to children

There are numerous projects **Worldwide** which members support. Branches also initiate their own **Branch Projects** to meet a local need.



PRAYER

"The Mothers Union wants to be a model to the church of unity and we want to re-introduce the concept of love."

Fleur Dorrell, Head of Prayer & Spirituality Unit, Mary Sumner House, January 2004

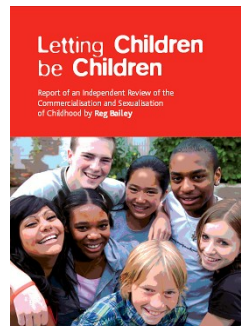
Prayer plays a vital part in the life of Mothers Union members. It has been described as the "heartbeat" of the organisation. Both personal prayer and corporate acts of worship are essential to the life of the Mothers Union and underpin all that we do. Members pray regularly for family life and all that affects the climate in which children are brought up.

The Diocese of Bath and Wells has links with

- False Bay in South Africa
- Shinyanga in Tanzania
- Umuahia and Ijebu in Nigeria
- Vellore in India

POLICY

The policy of the Mothers Union is to create positive change for families in society and to highlight issues at all levels of political life, not only speaking for those who are not heard, but actually giving those same people the chance to speak for themselves. Mothers Union members have a seat at the United Nations, being consulted on issues that affect women and family life. The Mothers Union also advises the Government of the possible impact on families of any new legislation as it is being planned.



THE MOTHERS UNION PRAYER

Loving Lord

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

*Bless the work of the Mothers Union
as we seek to share your love
through the encouragement, strengthening
and support of marriage and family life.*

*Empowered by your spirit,
may we be united in prayer and worship,
and in love and service
reach out as your hands across the world.*

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

MARY SUMNER PRAYER

All this day, O Lord,

let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;

and every life I touch,

do thou by thy spirit quicken,

whether through the word I speak,

the prayer I breathe,

or the life I live.

Amen.



For more information

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