

St Michael's Mothers' Union Report for APCM 2018.

Charity No 249814

At the beginning of 2017, the St Michael's Mothers' Union Branch consisted of 42 members and is one of the largest groups in the St Albans' Diocese. Sadly, however, towards the end of the year two of our members, Olive Westwood and Louise Thomas passed away, and two other members left owing to personal reasons. However, Frances Abraham was officially welcomed as a new member. So, at the beginning of 2018, we now have 39 members.

Our theme for 2017 was 'Faith in Action'. We had an excellent and varied programme of speakers and received a special 'Certificate of Commendation' by the Diocese and signed by Kim Wilkinson, our president. The year began with Mione Goldspink's talk on the Harlow Food Bank. In February, as we do yearly, we supported 'National Marriage Week' by prayers in the services. Our AGM was held in February and chaired by the Rev'd Emily Davis. March saw Kim Wilkinson speaking about our theme, and she also presented both Olive Westwood and Margaret Lyons with a certificate and flowers to celebrate 55 years membership. Members made posies to be given to children at the Mothering Sunday Service. Also, during March, our members were invited to the 'Lady Day Service', hosted by the Sawbridgeworth branch. Claire Conquest gave an interesting talk, in April, on her underwater adventures. May was an informal 'get together', and our member, Margaret Blascos, gave a talk on BS Arts Society, in June. Our Annual Party was held in July in the WCC, and money was raised for the MU 'Summer of Hope Appeal'. We do not meet in August. In September, we were entertained by Gaillie Pollock from BS Contexture Theatre Co., and Susan Roberts gave a talk about the MU magazine, 'Families First'. During the November meeting, great fun was held by members making 'flannel gifts', to be given to residents at Elmhurst. Also, we enjoyed our Christmas lunch at BS Golf Club. Our year ended with the Advent carol service lead by the Rev'd June Knight. Our theme this 2018 is, 'In Mary Sumner's Footsteps'. She was our founder in 1876, wanting to make a difference in the lives of others.

During the year at various meetings and activities, we raised money for various charities including: £200, MU Summer of Hope Appeal: £100, Relief Fund: £100, General Fund: £100, Britain & Ireland Development Fund: £50, Diocesan Reserve Fund: £50, Away from it All Fund. From our Wednesday Coffee Fund, we gave the Holiday Bible Week, £200.

A donation from the family of our past member, Margaret Vining, of £500, was given to St Michael's Church Bell Tower Fund.

Our members are involved in so many church activities, which includes the flowers in the Lady Chapel throughout the year and at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and the altar flowers for Mary Sumner Day, in August. Also, at the Holly Fair, we ran a Chocolate Tombola stall, raising £132 for the church missions.

My thanks to our committee: Pat Prime, treasurer, Jenny Savage, secretary, to Dorothy Risby, Sheila Bridgewater and Pat Rocknean, who meet every month. On behalf of the MU, I attended the PCC meetings, Deanery meetings and, also, the Diocesan meeting in March of this year, held in Hertford.

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the WCC at 2pm, details of which can be found on the church notice board, in my monthly reports both for the church magazine and Branch Newsletter. Visitors are always most welcome.

Heather Johns. Branch Leader.