

All Saints' Hertford Mothers' Union

Annual Report 2019

We have had another successful year and our members continue to be involved in many aspects of the worship and life of All Saints. Our Branch is one of only two remaining in Hertford & Ware Deanery & includes several members who worship elsewhere. We are pleased to have welcomed many visitors to our meetings & events throughout the year. We maintain close links with MU members in other churches and Ann Stephens Jones attended Diocesan events representing the Deanery.

However during 2019 The MU at St Albans Diocese planned a rearrangement of all its Deaneries into 'Regional Clusters'. This has been trialled in Lincoln and Exeter and is working well. The Hertford Deanery will be in the Eastern cluster and will also include the old Bishops Stortford & Cheshunt Deaneries (12 branches or groups). There was a full explanation at the Autumn Sharing Day and the new system will be rolled out in 2020. Thanks must go to Rosemary Bolton (Deanery Chair) Ann Stephens Jones (Deanery Secretary) and Lesley Self (Deanery Treasurer) for their work at Deanery level and to Janet Bird for being the Deanery Chaplain. As Janet is the only Chaplain in the new Eastern Cluster it is hoped that she will be happy to be the Eastern Cluster Chaplain in 2020.

Our members were also involved in the Mothering Sunday Service and we made the posies in my garden on a lovely spring afternoon on the Saturday. We carried the MU Banner in and out at that service, and it was lovely to see so many MU Members involved and everyone leaving with the posies. Members were also involved in the Easter Journey, providing & making the Mothering Sunday posies & making wreaths for ourselves & to order following the Starry Christmas Festival'.

Our programme in 2019 was varied and interesting. We started with Ann-Marie Parker speaking about 'English Women Artists' from C17 to C21, and their struggle to gain recognition in the Art World and membership of The Royal Academy.

Our Lent Reflection was led by Janet Bird, and in April Jean Riddell gave us a fascinating talk about the Blue plaques in Hertford placed on buildings of interest – either architecturally or because of who lived there

In May we celebrated National Marriage Week. Dorothy had the idea of putting together a display of the wedding pictures of those of us All Saints, and thank you to the many people who allowed us to display their photos and some of family members also. It was a great topic of conversation and stayed in church for many weeks culminating a general celebration of Marriage in September with

a blessing for many couples, including a couple from Kent who had been married at All Saints 50 years ago, and the renewal of vows for a Ruby Anniversary.

In May we heard from Kate Hurst and Catherine Henderson about the challenges faced by Syrian refugees, and lovely to meet some living locally who told us how they were coping. They shared some lovely biscuits and recipes with us.

In June we visited Myddleton House Gardens for a stroll around the lovely restored gardens of botanist Edward Bowles's gardens in Enfield followed by a refreshing cup of tea.

In July we had our annual lunch outing to Hopleys' Cafe in Much Hadham where around 15 members had a lovely afternoon. We also share a meeting with Stapleford when Kim Wilkinson, Diocesan Chairman, spoke on the MU Theme for 2019 'Listen, Observe, Act in step with God'.

In October Dorothy & Richard Toyn shared with us their memories of their holiday in Malta, focusing on the long and fascinating history that this tiny island has, and shared memories with Members whose family had served their during the dark days of WW11.

In June, we arranged a visit & guided tour of Waltham Abbey. Our guide was most informative on the history of the foundation of the Abbey & gave an excellent tour of the many historic points of interest. We shared lunch together & enjoyed a wander through the Abbey grounds & rose garden.

In November we had another of Peter Ruffles fascinating talks about Hertford – always a popular topic of MU Meetings!

During Advent, our travelling crib sets, (also containing Christmas story books, Advent calendar, colouring sheets & a short service) were given a home by our Messy Church & Family Service families, returning for the Crib Service.

Our Officers remain the same in 2020 and while we arranged another varied programme of events & outings with something for everyone, most have been postponed and we will see what 2021 brings... Please pick up a programme & come to any of our meetings which are open to all - when we are able to meet again - we would love to see you there.

Dorothy Toyn