

## **St Mary's Church Mothers' Union Branch**

Our Branch members have attended some of our meetings which have been held monthly in our Church Hall. (except August and December).

We continue to enjoy using our meetings for fellowship and worship, together with a Speaker giving a talk about family issues. Speakers have been from The Rochester Diocese Mothers' Union and also members of our Parish.

Our topics have been the Community work of St Mary's Church, Tots and Toddlers Group and Mrs Diane Williams spoke about the Church Group for Parents and Carers with young children, meeting every week and enjoying the various planned activities. Mrs Margaret Nicholas gave a talk entitled 'From Church to Cakes'. Margaret described how she got involved, which started as a hobby and her cakes are made to order. Mrs Margaret Samaranayake spoke about the Befrienders Organisation. How to become a volunteer and helping people. Miss Charlotte Ross spoke about Christian Homes and Mercy Ministries. This is a charity for women with Eating Disorders and how they can go and spend a set time in a Christian Home in Yorkshire to learn about and be helped to overcome their problem. Some Branch meetings have been different - a Games Afternoon – mainly Scrabble. Back to Basics – This was to reaffirm our Aims and Objectives of The Mothers' Union – this helped to remind members to continue to make them known in the wider community. We also had Poetry and Prose – bringing our favourite poetry or prose to read and talk about. World Issues – Near and Far – especially any issues found in the Families First – Mothers' Union Magazine. Our Outing was to the Coffee shop at The Hospices of Hope in Otford. Stormy weather prevented our trip to Hadlow College unfortunately. Martin our New Vicar was invited to 'Chair' our Annual General Meeting in September and our members attended the Annual Corporate Communion in Church in December. The Diocesan events during the year have been - The Lady Day Service at Rochester Cathedral, Wave of Prayer which was said in our homes in July. Mary Sumner Day 'Pilgrimage to Rochester Cathedral' - our members visited at least three Churches travelling to Rochester and said prayers and reflections for that Community. The 'Big Sing' event at Lamorbey went well. Our favourite hymns were sung followed by refreshments. Our own Church was used for the Tonbridge Archdeaconry Advent Service which Martin our Vicar presided and our Vice President Mrs Judy Cuthbert gave a talk about the last three years activities of the Triennial.

Our Mothers' Union Enterprise stall is supported by both members and parishioners for which we thank everyone who uses it.

Mary Wigger and Mary Howard passed away during the year. Our thanks go to their families for everything they did in supporting the aims and objectives of The Mothers' Union during the years. They contributed so much of their time and energy to not just our Branch but to The Mothers' Union Organisation in their own way too. We will miss them.

Thank you to Robin Tonge and Robert McLintock for mentioning our Branch Activities in the Mini-Mag and Website and to Martin Booth and everyone who supports our Branch.

Karen Forster-Pearce