

CANADIAN MOTHERS' UNION

Christian Concern for Families Worldwide



HANDBOOK

<https://canadianmothersunion.ca/>

September 2023

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THE VISION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES, AND VALUES

The Mothers' Union is the world's largest and most widely spread Christian family society. It began as a Christian women's group within the Anglican Communion but now membership is open to any baptized Christian.

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

Mothers' Union members **aim** to demonstrate the Christian faith in action through the transformation of communities worldwide.

The objectives are:

- 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 favorable to stable family life and the protection of children
- to help those whose family life has met with adversity.

Each member subscribes to the same **values**: Mothers' Union is a Christian mission organization working with people of all faiths and none. Mothers' Union is firmly rooted in a voluntary ethos centered on mutual respect and collaboration. The governance, leadership and programs are undertaken and driven by members within their own communities worldwide.



MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

Enrolled membership is open to any Christian baptized in the name of the Trinity, regardless of gender identity or family status, who accepts the Vision, Aim and Objectives, and Values of the Society.

INCORPORATION AND AUTONOMY

The Mothers' Union in Great Britain is incorporated by Royal Charter as a charitable society. The Canadian Mothers' Union became autonomous in 1974 by presenting its own Constitution and accepting, in principle, this Royal Charter, reserving the right to make changes where and when necessary, to further the work of the society in Canada. While not incorporated in Canada, The Canadian Mothers' Union, as of July 2000, has its name and logo (MU symbol on a maple leaf) protected under Section 9 of the Trademark Act. Section nine (9) of this Act prohibits any person from adopting and using this name or logo without permission.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

The present Constitution is based on the Royal Charter of 1974. A copy of the Constitution of The Canadian Society of the Mothers' Union can be obtained from the Canadian Council Secretary and is also available on the website. The Constitution and By-Laws are subject to change at biennial and national conference biennial meetings.

MOTHERS' UNION ORIGINS

The Society had its beginnings in 1876 in the parish of old Alresford, Hampshire, England, when Mary Elizabeth Sumner, the rector's wife, gathered the mothers of the parish to form a group to unite in prayer and service, working actively in their own homes for growth in marriage and the Christian upbringing of their children. History says she panicked when the moment came to speak of this new idea and her husband, George Sumner, spoke on her behalf. A week later Mary called another meeting and the Mothers' Union was born. Her idea took root and flourished in a small area until 1885, when she attended a large diocesan meeting in Winchester and the bishop who was to address a gathering of several hundred women suddenly called upon her to take his place. Quite unprepared, Mary Sumner appealed to the women of England to unite in prayer and to work



actively in their homes where the mothers and fathers of the future would grow up. Her speech was so moving that the next day Mothers' Union was organized at the diocesan level in Winchester and spread like wildfire throughout the British Isles and then overseas. In its 100th year, 1976, there were more than half a million members of many nationalities in almost every province of the Anglican Communion. Members of the Royal Family have always been supporters of the society. A member of the Royal Family is appointed as Patron of the Mothers' Union. In its 140th year (2016), Mothers' Union had over four million members in over eighty (80) countries.

CANADIAN HISTORY

In 1888 Harriet Ann Boomer of London, Ontario, wife of the dean of Huron Diocese, started the first Mothers' Union branch in Canada at Bishop Cronyn Memorial Church in that city. This branch lapsed at her death around 1912 but was revived in 1921. Meanwhile, Mrs. A. C. Frith, who had been enrolled in England before moving to Canada, started the first western branch at All Saints Church in Winnipeg. Their first enrollment was on Lady Day in 1905. The first Diocesan Council was formed in 1909 in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. The first Dominion Council (now known as The Canadian Council) was formed in Winnipeg in 1928 with Mrs. S. P. Matheson as the first president.

Mothers' Union continued to spread during the following decades. Mothers' Union members also belonged to the Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (W.A.). Both societies with their different aims complemented each other and enriched the life of the church.

Many changes took place in the church after the Second World War. One major change in Canada was that the Church of England was renamed the Anglican Church of Canada. In the 1960's the W.A. and all other church women's groups were asked to come under one "umbrella" and became part of a larger fellowship called Anglican Church Women. Mothers' Union agreed and came into the new society with the understanding that it would keep its name, overseas commitment and right of enrollment. This was not universally understood and caused some unnecessary branch closings.



In 1925, in England, the Mothers' Union added a clause to their membership rule stating that no divorced women could be enrolled in Mothers' Union. During this period in history this was not considered a narrow ruling, as the Church of England did not remarry divorced persons. By the 1960's, the feeling was growing within the society that marriage breakdown was not an unforgivable sin and that women in this situation needed the strength and comfort that Mothers' Union offered. In 1968, in England, a special commission was appointed to study this question and after five years a whole new vision opened for Mothers' Union worldwide, with a new membership rule which accepted any baptized Christian. There was a complete structural revision culminating in a new Royal Charter in 1974.

In the meantime, The Anglican Church of Canada voted to remarry divorced persons in the Church and the Canadian Mothers' Union felt they must follow the direction of the Canadian Church. This split the Canadian Mothers' Union officially from the worldwide Mothers' Union. The Dominion Council seriously wondered if Mothers' Union could or should continue or if they should consider disbanding at the end of their term of office in December 1970. At this final meeting in Winnipeg in 1970, the Dominion Council voted to suspend itself until the future was clearer. One diocese refused to consider this course and were supported by several branches across Canada who agreed 'that Mothers' Union still had a ministry to offer to the Canadian Church'. These members felt that as Canada had a vested interest in the Commission on Membership, Mothers' Union branches in this country had a duty to stay active until the findings of that Commission were published, discussed and finally put to the vote.

In 1970 an interim Canadian Representative, Mrs. Elspeth Newton from Niagara Diocese, was elected and given the power to appoint a small committee. Their mandate was to keep the then existing forty-two branches in touch with the Central Council in England and with each other. This committee promised to promote the work of Mothers' Union in Canada in every viable way until the Canadian Mothers' Union was once again a fully legal part of the worldwide fellowship. They had faith that changes would come, and that faith was vindicated. At Worldwide Council in 1973, the present membership qualifications and the Five Objects of the society were accepted.

In the autumn of 1973, a small conference of representatives from surviving Canadian Diocesan Councils and branches met in Guelph, Ontario. With the blessing of the Canadian Primate, The Most Reverend Ted Scott, and the Central President in England, Mrs. Susan Varah, these



representatives voted to continue and rebuild the Mothers' Union in Canada. The newly named Canadian Council (formerly called the Dominion Council) was re-established with Mrs. Elspeth Newton as president, for a three-year term of office. In 1974, autonomy (independence) was sought and granted. During the period between the 1973 Conference and the Canadian Centennial Conference in 1988 the number of branches had increased from thirty to eighty-five. Since then membership has declined nationally.

THE WORLDWIDE MOTHERS' UNION TODAY

Worldwide membership exceeds four million members, making Mothers' Union the largest Christian worldwide organization. The headquarters of The Mothers' Union is Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB, England. This "Heart of The Mothers' Union" was built with the contributions of thousands of Mothers' Union members and was officially opened by Mary, The Princess Royal, in 1925.

All the administrative offices of the worldwide Mothers' Union are in this building. Mary Sumner House also houses a chapel (where Midday Prayers are said daily), meeting rooms, and conference facilities which are rented out to government and businesses in the greater Westminster area.

Mothers' Union Enterprises (MUE) is a successful company which generates a percentage of the general fund. MUE provides solely online shopping at <https://mueshop.org/>.

WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENT

The Development Department is responsible for overseeing programs in many of the Provinces globally. The Development Team at Mary Sumner House manages the Overseas Fund, which provides monies for Mothers' Union Provincial Community Development Coordinators (PCDC's) and establishes grants to help start community-based programs. Such programs include Savings and Credit, Metamorphosis (Britain and Ireland), Literacy and Agriculture Program, Gender Based Violence Reduction Program, Family Life Program and the Flourishing Families Program. In many parts of the world the Church and the Mothers' Union together have raised the status of women and given them a voice in their communities.



The Fundraising, Communications and Retail departments are responsible for partnering with other agencies in funding initiatives in order to support the Development Programs. The department also produces the *Connected* magazine in the spring and fall, which can be purchased from MUE online. This magazine gives a wonderful view of Mothers' Union projects, news, challenges, and involvement of Mothers' Union members in the Worldwide Mothers' Union. The Communication department also produces the Annual Prayer Diary which includes the Worldwide Wave of Prayer, prayer resources written by members globally and a letter from our Worldwide President to members. This magazine is also available online for purchase from MUE.

****The Canadian Mothers' Union passed a motion at the National Conference 2000, "that in the month of March of each year, the meeting closest to Lady Day (March 25th) an offering be taken at every branch, such offering to be named the 'Overseas Fund Donation', and to be forwarded to the Canadian Council Treasurer who will then forward these monies to England."*

One of the most successful fundraising campaigns to be run in the UK is the Make a Mother's Day campaign to support the three centrally administered programs. In 2010 the campaign was initiated in Canada as an annual national fundraiser for the Overseas Development Fund. Although it is designed to be held near Mothering Sunday in the UK and Mother's Day in Canada, it can be conducted at any time of the year.

CANADIAN OUTREACH

One of the Canadian Mothers' Union's special projects is the Northern Clergy Families' Fund (NCFE). This fund was inspired by Elspeth Newton, then Canadian President, and the Canadian Council of Mothers' Union, out of a desire to do something specific for the Church yet keeping in mind the concern for Christian family life as outlined in the Mothers' Union Aim, Purpose and Objectives. With the cooperation and approval of the then Primate, Archbishop Ted Scott, the fund was started in 1974, with a gift of \$25 from Mrs. Bea Fitzer of Calgary. The Northern Clergy Wives Holiday Fund, as it was then called, hoped to raise \$200 to \$300 a year to give a woman in an isolated mission a trip "outside." The idea was offered to the branches, word spread, and within six months two women had received cheques. Since then the fund has been well supported, with gifts to recipients increasing in size and number over the years. The original name was changed to Northern Clergy Wives Fund because some recipients hesitated to accept holiday money and then



use it for a greater need. Once women were ordained the fund received its present name, The Northern Clergy Families' Fund. The cheque is always made out to the spouse, not the clergy person, unless not married.

Recipients' names are submitted by their Bishops and the cheque is an outright gift. The fund receives support from many sources within and outside the Mothers' Union. A brochure is available from the NCFE Coordinator explaining this fund in greater detail.

https://canadianmothersunion.ca/northern_clergy_families_fund

In 1981, the Trust Fund for the Northern Clergy Families Fund was created by the Diocese of Nova Scotia/Prince Edward Island. The interest generated by the initial investment amount of \$1,000.00 was rolled into the operating account of the NCFE. This left the principal intact to keep producing a return. In 1983 a gift of \$600 from the Missionettes, Diocese of Rupert's Land was added to the principal investment bringing it to \$1,600.

The fund grew substantially in March 1988 when a sum of \$2,000.00 was received from the estate of Mrs. Sarah Marshall. At the Biennial Conference, November 2002, a motion was put forth by Ethel Nelson to re-name the trust fund. It was to be called The Sarah Marshall Trust Fund, re-invested as it came due. The interest earned is given to the Northern Clergy Families' Fund.

The brief discussion of this information during the business meeting of the Conference led to the question as to who Sarah Marshall was. After researching the history files and a conversation with Elspeth Newton, it was found that during the early seventies when many Mothers' Union Branches in Canada began to close, Sarah Marshall remained a very faithful Mothers' Union member – a “Living Light” – to use Elspeth's words. She was a member of the St. Stephen's, Calgary branch and became a “mother figure” when the branches really started to flourish again. Always wearing a hat, Sarah is remembered as a tireless church worker and was famous for her ‘Grandma's Attic’ at every tea and bazaar. When she died in August of 1987, she was in her nineties, leaving behind her two (2) daughters, Phyllis and Joan. Many thanks to Barbara Goode of the St. Stephen's, Calgary branch for the memories and photos from their archives. If anyone has additional information on Sarah Marshall, it would be wonderful to share with the membership by submitting it to the newsletter editors.



Another outreach supported by the Canadian Mothers' Union is the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF). This fund was inspired by the Secretary of the Council for Social Service for the Anglican Church of Canada, the Reverend Doctor Leonard Hatfield (later Bishop of The Diocese of Nova Scotia). This fund engages in development work, responds to emergencies, works to protect refugees, educates and advocates for change both in Canada and overseas. Mothers' Union members passed a motion at the 1979 Triennial Conference in Halifax, to support PWRDF by assisting their parishes in promoting and educating parishioners in the work and importance of this fund. If parish outreach projects do not include PWRDF, Mothers' Union members are encouraged to initiate such action.

THE WORLDWIDE WAVE OF PRAYER

Changing every three (3) days, the Worldwide Wave of Prayer links the Mothers' Union in a continuous chain of prayer around the world. The Wave of Prayer is found in the Annual Prayer Diary which is produced each year by the Communications department and is available online at [Worldwide Wave of Prayer Link](#)

CANADIAN WAVE OF PRAYER

Changing every five (5) day, the Canadian Wave of Prayer reminds members to say prayers for Canadian branches and other individuals. The Canadian Council is responsible for updating the Wave of Prayer under the direction of the Secretary. This prayer list is available online.

MIDDAY PRAYERS

Mothers' Union members are encouraged to say Midday Prayers each day and pray for members in the dioceses, branches or persons mentioned in both the Worldwide and Canadian Wave of Prayer. If all Mothers' Union members, in all dioceses, prayed Midday Prayers, it would create a continuous prayer chain around the world every 24 hours. The Midday Prayers are available online.

NOTE: The Waves of Prayer should be used at all Branch, Diocesan and Canadian Council meetings.



STRUCTURE OF THE MOTHERS' UNION

Worldwide Structure

What Is the Board of Trustees?

The Board of Trustees of the Mothers' Union is responsible in law for the good governance of the affairs of the Society. They have the legal responsibility to ensure that the organization, as a registered charity, conducts its affairs in a proper manner, including the use of its funds in line with the purposes for which the charity was established.

Leadership structures were updated in the revised constitution in 2018, to reflect best governance practice. The movement is led by a Worldwide Board of Trustees. The Board meets at least twice a year and comprises the elected roles of Worldwide President as Chair of the Board, and up to twelve (12) members who are elected as Zonal Trustees from the different regions of the world, five of whom are from Britain and Ireland, which is the prime source of funds for the Central Charity. The eleven Zones are comprised of the following Provinces:

Zone A	Provinces of Korea, Myanmar, North India, South India, Sri Lanka
Zone B	Provinces of Canada, South America, USA, West Indies
Zone C	Provinces of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Australia, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea
Zone D	Provinces of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Jerusalem and the Middle East
Zone E	Provinces of Central Africa, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Southern Africa
Zone F	Provinces of Burundi, Congo, Indian Ocean, West Africa
Zone G	Provinces of Canterbury (includes Europe)
Zone H	Province of York
Zone I	Province of All-Ireland
Zone J	Province of Scotland
Zone K	Province of Wales



Elections take place every three (3) years, and any individual is eligible to stand for a maximum of two (2) terms. In addition, since 2019 there will be up to four (4) appointed Trustees to provide professional skills to complement those of the elected members.

Who is the Electorate?

The electorate for the Worldwide President and the Board of Trustees is set out in the Regulations of the Central Charity. The Worldwide President Electoral College and Zonal Electoral College are determined by the Board triennially. The Zonal Electoral College is composed of Provincial Presidents, Diocesan Presidents and/or Provincial and Diocesan leaders as determined by the Board. A Nominations Committee of the Board of Trustees oversee the electoral process.

Who sits on the Worldwide Council?

The Worldwide Council is a forum representing the worldwide membership of the Central Charity. Members of Worldwide Council comprise the following:

- The Worldwide President and all members of the Board of Trustees
- The Provincial Presidents throughout the world, and
- A representative of the past Central and Worldwide Presidents of the Central Charity.

An additional representative from each Province represented is entitled to attend meetings of the Council as an observer and non-voting member on the understanding that their costs are covered entirely by their Province.

Worldwide Council is convened by the Worldwide President and meets at least once in any three (3) -year period, including one (1) meeting designated as the Triennial Meeting. The business of the Triennial Meeting includes the approval of the Strategic Plan proposed by the Board for the following triennium.

Canadian Structure

The governing council of Mothers' Union in Canada is called the Canadian Council and operates for a four (4) year term of office, rotating to different dioceses across the country. Council meets at least five (5) times a year (more if required). At the end of the second year a Biennial Meeting shall be called with a National Conference Biennial Meeting in the fourth year.



The council consists of an elected executive, namely: the President, Vice-president, Treasurer, Secretary. The Chaplain is a member of the executive but is appointed. There are elected department coordinators for Literature & Marketing, Lone Members, Link, Historian, Newsletter Editor, Northern Clergy Families' Fund and Conference Coordinator. There may be other coordinators appointed for special duties at the council's discretion. In addition, the Past President, Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Representatives are also members of the Canadian Council. The Canadian Council communicates directly with Mary Sumner House in England regarding any areas of concern in Canada. The Canadian President (Provincial President) represents the Province of Canada as a member of the Worldwide Council.

Diocesan Structure

The Diocesan Council is the central organization in a diocese drawing the individual branches together, organizing rallies, workshops, special services, retreats, etc. to help strengthen the work of the Society. Diocesan Councils are encouraged to help promote the growth of Mothers' Union within the diocese. It is the link between the individual branches and the Canadian Council. The elected executive and appointed coordinators are like those on the Canadian Council. All branch leaders are part of Diocesan Council and are encouraged to attend all diocesan meetings which should be held five times a year. The recommended term of office for the Diocesan Council executive is two (2) years with an optional two (2) year additional term.

Closure of a Diocesan Council

If a Diocesan Council can no longer fulfill its role in conducting the work of the Mothers' Union, due to lack of branches and/or the inability to form an executive, the Canadian Council shall be notified. The members in that diocese in conjunction with the Canadian Council may wish to appoint a Diocesan Representative.

All Diocesan records should be sent to the Canadian Council. All monies that have been collected in the name of Mothers' Union should be forwarded to the Canadian Council or may be earmarked for a special project of Mothers' Union.

Diocesan Representatives

This office grew out of a need for contact and communication in 1973 when, at that time, there were only two Diocesan Councils active in Canada. This position is optional and filled only if a Diocesan Council or Canadian Council sees a need. Diocesan Representatives may be chosen to



stay connected with scattered branches that have no Diocesan Councils in their area, to work where necessary with existing councils to spread Mothers' Union information and strengthen the society. Where there is both a Diocesan President and a Diocesan Representative, the Diocesan President is the senior officer in the diocese. The needs of scattered branches or parishes where interest in Mothers' Union has been expressed are so different across Canada and are so varied that this office is more necessary in some areas than in others.

Branch Structure

A Branch can only be formed in a parish with the consent and full cooperation of the priest. The priest should be invited (when possible) to take an active part in branch services and meetings.

Every branch has its own special needs, and time, place and frequency of meetings are local decisions. Every meeting should include a service led by the priest or a member.

The leader of a branch is called the Branch Leader and has the special duty of preparing new members for enrollment. There may be a Co-branch Leader if the branch so desires. Other elected officers are Secretary, Treasurer and a Literature Coordinator. Special coordinators such as Link, Historian, Program Convenor, Telephone Committee, Special Events, will depend on the size and needs of the branch. The recommended term of office for a branch executive is two (2) years with an optional two (2) year additional term.

VOTING PRIVILEGES

Branch Level

All members of a Mothers' Union branch who have paid their annual dues have a vote in decision making in the branch.

Diocesan Level

All members of the Diocesan Council, which includes all the Branch Leaders in the diocese, have a vote on diocesan issues.



National Organization Level

All members of the National Organization which consists of Canadian Council, Past Canadian Presidents and all Branch Leaders across Canada, have voting privileges at national biennial meetings. The Canadian Council consists of the elected executive, including the appointed Chaplain, the elected and appointed coordinators, the Past President, Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Representatives.

PROXIES

All voting delegates at any level can appoint a proxy (a person authorized to act for another in voting) by using the official Form A of the Constitution.

FORMING A NEW BRANCH

When a parish is considering starting a branch, an information night is held with a representative from Diocesan Council, a Diocesan Representative or a Branch Leader to explain about Mothers' Union and answer questions. If there is interest in forming a branch, a study of the Five Objectives should follow. Mothers' Union is a way of life, and enrollment is a commitment to that way of life, rather than "joining a club". No one should make the promises before he/she feels ready. Attendance at three (3) meetings is recommended before enrollment, but a longer period of six (6) months to one year is more beneficial. The initial enrollment of a branch should, if possible, take place at a Sunday morning service, and candidates and Branch Leader may be presented by a Diocesan sponsor or Diocesan Representative. In the case of an isolated branch, the priest both sponsors and enrolls the candidates who promise to be faithful to their baptism, to uphold the Mothers' Union Aim and Objectives, and to continue in public worship, prayer and Bible study.

A Non-Parochial Branch

While the parish church and its congregation is the normal and almost universal setting for a branch, there can be exceptional cases. Canada has had a few in the past, and they exist in parts of the United Kingdom. There is nothing in the constitution to forbid people who have made, or wish to make, the commitment from meeting quietly together for prayer, fellowship and mutual



support. This offers a solution for lone members and interested friends (of any Christian denomination) where there is no branch available and no support for a branch in nearby churches. Enrollment could be done by a diocesan chaplain or any other sympathetic priest. Such a branch should be linked directly with the Canadian Council if it is not in a diocese with a Diocesan Council.

CLOSING A BRANCH

Abeyance

Due to circumstances a branch in a parish may go into abeyance in the hope that a new young branch may come into being in a few years' time. The Diocesan Council and the Canadian Council shall be informed. Members may wish to continue as Lone Members or Diocesan Members and every effort should be made to keep them in touch with the Canadian Mothers' Union. After a period, and if the branch is not reactivated, the branch may be closed after consultation with Diocesan Council.

Closure

If, for reasons of age, lack of members or the inability to conduct the work of the Mothers' Union, a branch wishes to close, the Diocesan President or the Canadian Council shall be consulted. It is advised that three (3) months' notice be given to the Diocesan or Canadian Council when a branch intends to close. All records should be sent to the Diocesan Council, Diocesan Representative or Canadian Council. All monies that have been collected in the name of Mothers' Union should be forwarded to the Diocesan Council or Canadian Council or may be earmarked for a special project of Mothers' Union (*also refer to section on Banners*)

Special Membership

Lone Members

Mothers' Union members who have no branch in their area, or are unable to attend branch meetings, may remain part of the active Mothers' Union life through the Canadian Lone Members' Coordinator. The coordinator will regularly correspond with, receive yearly dues from, send newsletter subscriptions and encourage lone members to attend conferences. Each diocese should know the 'lone members' in their area and advise them of all diocesan functions.



A person with no available branch and who wishes to become a lone member may, after a study of the Aim and Objectives, seek enrollment at a Diocesan Rally, at a parish service or a diocesan event, or in any other manner as determined by Canadian Council.

An *Online Lone Members Group* has been established for members who wish to gather online on a monthly basis. This provides an opportunity for members to join in prayer, have discussions and listen to speakers on topics of concern to the members. Any Mothers' Union members is invited to join. For more information, contact info@canadianmothersunion.ca

Diocesan Members

Diocesan Members uphold the vision and values of Mothers' Union and support it by paying dues. They may attend rallies and conferences, but do not usually attend branch meetings. They are usually enrolled at a rally or conference.



JOB DESCRIPTIONS – CANADIAN COUNCIL

Canadian President

The Canadian President (Provincial President) is the chief executive on Canadian Council and is the liaison officer between the Canadian Mothers' Union and the Worldwide Mothers' Union and:

- As a member of Worldwide Council, is entitled to attend these meetings held twice a year virtually, and attend Triennial Meetings whether they are held virtually or in person at the end of every Triennium;
- Prepares a yearly report on the state of Mothers' Union in Canada for Mary Sumner House;
- Chairs the Canadian Council meetings at least five (5) times a year;
- Arranges for council members to attend via virtual means, if required;
- Oversees conference planning with the Conference Coordinator and council members and chairs the business sessions of both biennial meetings;
- Represents Mothers' Union within the Province (Canada) and supports the Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Representatives;
- Visits dioceses during term of office, if able;
- Prepares a message for each newsletter;
- Responds to all emails;
- Answers any queries from the website;
- Corresponds with the webmaster to update all material on the website, delete all dated information and add new material as required (*a website coordinator may be appointed to look after the website if a member is available*);
- Is responsible for the Canadian banner and decides where it should be displayed in diocese; ensures that the banner is insured;
- Keeps Conference banner and makes sure the blue conference block is completed with the date and place of the national conference;
- Attends the National Anglican Church Women Presidents' & Coordinators' Conference.
- Keeps the trademark documents and passes them on to the next President. Informs the trademark company of the incoming President.



Canadian Immediate Past President

The Immediate Past President has no job description but has a vote on the Canadian Council. The Immediate Past President provides continuity for the new council and is viewed as being able to pass on the knowledge gained over the four-year term.

Canadian Vice President

The Canadian Vice President follows the work of the President closely and:

- Fills in whenever and wherever the President is unable to do so;
- Assumes the role of the President in the event that the President is unable to complete the term of office;
- Takes an active role in all aspects of council work, perhaps chairing committees or special projects;
- Updates the Handbook and the Canadian Constitution as changes are approved;
- Fills in for the role of Secretary when required.

Canadian Secretary

NOTE: Electronic correspondence is utilized, unless otherwise noted.

The Secretary, together with the President, plans meetings, prepares the agendas and receives Council Members' reports;

- Sends notice of meeting and requests reports ten (10) days prior to Canadian Council Meeting;
- Sends the agenda, reports and minutes out to Council members five (5) days prior to meeting;
- Records the minutes of Canadian Council meetings, executive meetings and any special meetings;
- Sends out draft copies of Council minutes to all members of Council after the meeting. Once the minutes are approved (at the next council meeting), the approved minutes are sent to Council members plus the Zone B Trustee;
- Maintains the Canadian Directory (contact lists of all Branch Leaders and Co-Leaders; Branch I.D. numbers and number of members);
- Identifies the number of Newsletter hard copies required (via the annual forms), for distribution directly to the Branch Leaders and Lone Members;
- Communicates with the greater membership;



- All usual communications from the Secretary to Branches and Lone Members, is sent through Diocesan Presidents, Representatives and Lone Members Coordinator, who are to ensure the communications are forwarded to branches. At least forty-five (45) days prior to the biennial and national conference biennial meetings, all motions and amendments which will be presented at the meetings are sent out by the secretary to all voting delegates, i.e. the National Organization
- Compiles reports and conference books for biennial and national conference biennial meetings;
 - In the case of an on-line biennial meeting and biennial/conference, reports and other relevant information for the Conference Book are sent electronically to the Conference Coordinator
 - Compiles a list of delegates, both voting and non-voting
- Compiles information gathered from the annual forms to be sent out in October of each year to Diocesan Presidents and Representatives for distribution to Branch Leaders (or representatives) in time for completion by December 15 of the current year;
- Attends to all correspondence as directed by the President.

Canadian Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible to open and maintain bank accounts for all revenue and expenses:

- Mothers' Union bank accounts should have three signing officers, and two of them are required to sign all cheques;
- Keeps an up-to-date ledger (computer and hard copy);
- Records all receipts and expenditures, crediting or debiting each to the proper account;
- Issues official Income Tax Receipts (stamped with the charity registration number) for donations made by individuals to Canadian Mothers' Union for:
 - General Fund
 - Northern Clergy Families' Fund
 - Sarah Marshall NCFE Trust Fund
 - Travel Fund
 - Make a Mother's Day Campaign Fund
 - Overseas Development Fund
 - Parenting Program
 - Northern Parenting Fund



- Rev. Debbie Strickland Memorial Fund.
- General receipts may be issued in other cases.
- Presents a statement and a financial report at each Council meeting, a year-end report to the membership via the newsletter and an up-to-date statement for both biennial booklets;
- Manages all annual fees (membership & newsletter), and all donations;
- Sends any donations received for NCFE to the NCFE Coordinator to distribute; receives reports from the NCFE Coordinator;
- Upon maturity, reinvests the principle of the Sarah Marshall Trust Fund and moves the accrued interest to the Northern Clergy Families Fund;
- Receives the Lone Member annual dues and regularly contacts the Lone Member Coordinator to make sure their lists match;
- Annually, sends the portion of dues owed to Mary Sumner House (in pounds sterling), along with any donations received for the Overseas Fund (Lady Day), Make a Mothers' Day Campaign, and Mary Sumner House;
- Receives registration fees for biennial and conference meetings and pays all associated costs;
- Semi-annually, completes and files a GST/HST claim form to recoup 50% of all taxes paid by Mothers' Union;
- Submits the annual Registered Charity Information Return to Canada Revenue Agency at the end of each fiscal year. The Annual Financial Report must accompany this. When the return is completed for the fourth year in office, sends the incoming Treasurer's mailing information to Canada Revenue Agency;
- Ensures the books are reviewed following the fourth year in office.

Canadian Literature & Marketing Coordinator

- Maintains a literature and marketing account with Mary Sumner House. A sum of money from the Canadian Treasurer may be deposited in a bank account, as a float, specifically for orders to Mary Sumner House;
- Prepares orders as received and adjusts order total to reflect taxes and postage;
- Keeps a supply of literature on hand (i.e. worship books, membership cards, pins, current publications) for requests to order;
- Displays and sells literature and products at the biennial and national conference meetings;
- With Council members' approval, suggests creation of Canadian merchandise for biennial and national conference meetings;



- Initial layout for this merchandise should be paid for from biennial meeting expenses but should not be part of registration fee as items will be sold throughout the year
- Due to strict copyright, Mary Sumner House merchandise is not permitted to be photocopied or reproduced.

Canadian Chaplain

The Bishop of the Diocese in which the Canadian President resides shall appoint the recommended Chaplain. The nature of this office is spiritual and supportive. It is also hoped that the Chaplain will be a challenging visionary of the work of Mothers' Union in the Anglican Church.

- Leads the worship portion of Canadian Council meetings;
- Takes part fully in the agenda item discussions;
- Leads special services organized by the Canadian Council;
- Arranges the worship of both biennial meetings and the national conference;
- Is available for the support of all Council members through mentoring.

Canadian Newsletter Editor

The Newsletter Editor is responsible for compiling and publishing the Canadian Newsletter two (2) times per calendar year. All members receive a newsletter as part of annual membership dues.

- Forwards an electronic copy to Diocesan Presidents, Representatives and Lone Member Coordinator for circulation to branches and Lone Members;
- Forwards an electronic copy to Worldwide Contacts and other contacts as directed by Council;
- Obtains list of requested number of hard copies for each branch from the Canadian Secretary;
- Obtains list of requested number of hard copies for Lone Members from the Lone Member Coordinator;
- Mails **requested** hard copies to branch leaders and Lone Members;
- Consults with NCFE Coordinator to determine number of hard copies to send to fund recipients;
- Encourages all members, especially Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Representatives, to contribute articles, photographs and reports on Diocesan or Branch events;
- Encourages Council Coordinators to contribute to the Newsletter.



Canadian Historian

The Historian is responsible for keeping history books up to date and photocopying all fragile material;

- Encourages diocesan and branch groups to maintain history books and photo albums;
- Sends pertinent information for inclusion in the history books, especially entries for the Book of Remembrance;
- Historical information should be carefully filed and readily available;
- Stores all historical materials required for insurance riders and retains copies of Canadian Council minutes, newsletters and all conference reports to be sent to the archives at the end of the term of office;
- Consults with the Council before deciding which materials will go to the archives.
- Discusses with Council the need to make a donation to the archives. This donation, if approved, would happen in the final year of the Council's term.
- Displays history books at conferences and updates them as information is supplied.

Canadian Link Coordinator

The Link Coordinator is responsible for arranging, updating and maintaining correspondence links between branches in Canada and between Canadian and international branches:

- Matches a Canadian branch's link request with another branch's link coordinator using the National Link Database, thus completing the link circle so each Canadian branch is linked with at least one other Canadian branch and when possible, at least one international branch;
- Updates the National Link Database with required changes to existing links when advised;
- Maintains the National Link Database with the existing links between all Canadian branches, as well as between Canadian and international branches;
- Maintains established relationships with the link coordinators from other dioceses, districts, regions, or countries to be aware of when and where other links may be available;
- Investigates when a Canadian branch no longer is able to connect with their link, either Canadian or international;
- Communicates via mail, telephone, or through online options such as email, text, or live streaming services.
- Regularly review website content regarding Links, and submit necessary amendments to webmaster. https://canadianmothersunion.ca/canadian_links



Canadian Lone Member Coordinator

The Lone Member Coordinator is responsible to stay connected with those members who do not have a branch in their area or who are unable to attend branch meetings and:

- Communicates by mail, email, subscriptions to the newsletter and seasonal greetings to keep members in touch and updated;
- Be the Lone Member voice on Canadian Council;
- Collects membership dues to be forwarded to the Canadian Treasurer;
- Provides number of newsletter subscriptions required to the Newsletter Editor;
- Ensures copies of all motions to be discussed at biennial and national conference biennial meetings are made available to Lone Members. Lone Members may inform the Lone Member Coordinator as to their voting wishes;
- Organizes monthly online meetings for lone members and any other members who wish to attend. The meeting will include a time of prayer, time of fellowship and any speakers or programs of interest to the group. https://canadianmothersunion.ca/lone_members

Northern Clergy Families' Fund (NCFE) Coordinator

The Northern Clergy Families' Fund (NCFE) Coordinator is responsible for managing this fund on behalf of the Canadian Mothers' Union. This fund, administered by the Canadian Mothers' Union, provides 'no strings attached' unsolicited gifts to the spouses of clergy serving in parishes within the Council of the North. The amount gifted is set by Canadian Council and:

- Manages a separate bank account so any donations for NCFE sent to the Canadian Treasurer can be directed to the NCFE Coordinator;
- Keeps a detailed record of all donations received (from whom, number of gifts are sent out, to which diocese, and names of individual recipients) and sends to the Canadian Treasurer;
- Ensures contributions to this fund received directly from groups, individuals and churches are acknowledged with receipts and notifies individual donors that they will be issued a tax receipt from the Canadian Treasurer at the proper time;
- Sends out gifts as soon as funds permit;
- Communicates with Bishops in the Council of the North (on a rotational basis), requesting names and addresses of two (2) recipients from each diocese who would benefit from this fund;
- Submits regular reports at Canadian Council meetings and provides submissions to the newsletter;



- Sends a courtesy newsletter to each recipient.

It is the responsibility of every Mothers' Union branch to support this fund as it is the first national project. Brochures are available from the NCFE Coordinator and information can be found on the website. https://canadianmothersunion.ca/northern_clergy_families_fund

Canadian Conference Coordinator

The Conference Coordinator is responsible for organizing the Biennial Meeting in the second year and the National Conference and Meeting in the fourth year of each council's term:

- Invites members at large to volunteer to serve on the planning committee;
- Adds helpful information to the planning manual passed on from previous conferences;
- Oversees securing the venue, budget, programs, services, registration form and communication regarding the Biennial Meeting and National Conference.

Canadian Parenting Coordinator

The Parenting Program of the Worldwide Mothers' Union was introduced in 2000 and has operated under different names in twenty-three countries. In Canada, it has been titled *Parents Supporting Parents*. https://canadianmothersunion.ca/parenting_program

The purpose of the program has been to help parents and caregivers to find common ground and support each other as they navigate how to bring up children in today's complex world. Trained facilitators offer the program and tailor the approach to the culture and needs of the communities.

The Mothers' Union Worldwide Parenting Program was introduced into Canada in June 2008, when a workshop for facilitators was conducted by a Worldwide Parenting Program trainer. Further training for eight (8) facilitators was held in 2012 and several parenting programs have been conducted by these trained facilitators.

In November 2013, Kathleen Snow and Celia Dodds traveled to Guyana for a *Train for Trainers* program for facilitators. The first training of facilitators took place in Nova Scotia in April 2016 and eight (8) facilitators were trained. A similar training of facilitators occurred in the diocese of Moosonee. The Parenting Manual has been translated into two of the Indigenous languages.



The Canadian Mothers' Union Parenting Program had its own logo approved by the Canadian Council in 2020. The Mothers' Union reference document, *Passionate About Parenting A Quick Guide* by Hannah Taylor and Sheran Harper, stresses sensitivity to cultural group norms.

In 2018, the Worldwide Mothers' Union recognized that the Parenting Program was outdated but was serving an important purpose. The program was updated in 2022 and titled *Flourishing Families*. The course will be piloted in the UK in 2023, after which an approved curriculum will be distributed worldwide.

The Canadian Parenting Coordinator;

- Promotes the *Flourishing Families* program within the Canadian Mothers' Union;
- Keeps the Canadian Council of Mothers' Union updated on the program;
- Sets up facilitator training as needed in coordination with accredited Mothers' Union trainers;
- Liaises with other organizations to hold facilitator training when directed by council;
- Sources funding for facilitator training;
- Helps to set up parenting programs in Canadian communities.

Canadian Advisor on Gender-Based Issues

- Keeps informed of the Worldwide Mothers' Union focus on gender-based issues and actions;
- Keeps abreast of gender-based issues in Canada via related websites (ie. Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, Canadian Women's Federation, White Ribbon Campaign);
- Provides information and resources pertaining to gender-based issues to Canadian Council;
- Recommends advocacy actions and/or projects to Canadian Council to be recommended to branches;
- If possible, and with the support of the Worldwide Mothers' Union, attends the UNCSW meetings online or in person;
- Reports to Canadian Council on results of UNCSW meetings, if attended;
- Sources out or prepares an article related to gender-based issues for the Canadian Mothers' Union Newsletter;
- Monitors the Advocacy page on the Canadian Mothers' Union website for up-to-date links and information and reports to the Canadian Mothers' Union website manager.



Additional Coordinators

Coordinators for other positions on Canadian Council, for example social action, may be appointed or deleted, as necessary.

Term of Office

The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Coordinators of Canadian Council are elected at the National Conference Biennial Meeting. The Chaplain is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop of the diocese where the Canadian President resides. All serve a four (4) year term. If a vacancy occurs during that term, the Canadian Council may appoint a member to fill the vacancy. If a member fails to perform her duty, this member may be requested to resign by the Canadian Council Executive and then the position would be deemed vacant.



JOB DESCRIPTIONS – DIOCESAN COUNCIL

According to the constitution, the following officers are considered the executive of Diocesan Council. Other coordinators for specific tasks can be appointed. Diocesan Councils are encouraged to set up a booth at the Diocesan Synod, if possible, to make the Mothers' Union more visible.

Diocesan President

The Diocesan President is responsible to maintain a link with Canadian Council and keep branches informed:

- Chairs Diocesan Council meetings. There are to be at least five council meetings and at least one rally, retreat, quiet day or other gathering for branch members each year;
- Visits branches in the Diocese when able;
- Visits potential branches, and installs new branches when possible;
- Submits written reports to Canadian Council;
- Submits a report regularly to the Newsletter Editor informing of diocesan special events;
- Attends Canadian Council meetings.

Past Diocesan President

The Past Diocesan President has no real job description but is an important link of information and support to the new Diocesan Council and is a voting member of the Diocesan Council.

Diocesan Vice President

The Vice President is responsible for being fully aware of everything that is happening on Diocesan Council:

- Assumes the duties of Diocesan President in the event the President is away or unable to complete the term;
- Chairs special committees;
- Performs the duties of Coordinator for a specific task, such as Diocesan Members.

Diocesan Secretary

- Takes responsibility for all correspondence;
- Maintains Diocesan Council minutes;
- Assists the president in making up the agenda for each meeting;



- Keeps diocesan directory as current as possible;
- Ensures appropriate cards are sent to members in certain circumstances;
- Assists the Diocesan President with notices and year-end reports.

Diocesan Treasurer

- Opens and maintains a bank account, to cover monies both received and paid out;
- Collects all dues and donations to funds;
- Sends the apportionment owed to the Canadian Council Treasurer;
- Sends donations for the Northern Clergy Families' Fund to the NCFE Coordinator;
- Forwards any donations received for the Make a Mother's Day campaign to the Canadian Treasurer.

Diocesan Chaplain

The Diocesan Bishop appoints the Chaplain:

- Supports the council, conducts services, may enroll members and may lead Bible studies and meditations at diocesan gatherings;
- Seeks to challenge the Council on their role as Mothers' Union members.

Diocesan Literature & Marketing Coordinator

- Keeps a supply of literature on hand, including worship books, membership cards and pins;
- Orders literature supplies from the Canadian Literature & Marketing Coordinator, although can also order directly from Mary Sumner House;
- Sets up displays at diocesan gatherings and synods.

Diocesan Representative

In dioceses where there are only one or two branches and not enough members to form a Diocesan Council, Canadian Council appoint a Diocesan Representative:

- Acts as liaison between the Canadian Council and the branches and may visit from time to time;
- Arranges a Quiet Day or other functions to come together - if branches are close enough;
- Writes articles on diocesan events for the newsletter;
- Prepares an annual report for Canadian Council;
- Prepares reports for the biennial and national conference biennial meeting.



JOB DESCRIPTIONS – BRANCH

According to the Constitution the following positions form the executive of a branch: Branch Leader, Secretary, Treasurer and Chaplain. In a branch that is small in numbers the positions may be combined, e.g. Secretary/Treasurer, or some may be rotated among members.

The following suggested job descriptions are only guidelines. Branch positions should be decided on based on the size and structure of the branch and be done with love and discretion. Any member who accepts an office is entitled to the support of all co-workers. Some branches ease the work of the Branch Leader by appointing a program coordinator, project leaders or co-leaders.

Branch Leader

- Prepares new members for enrollment, informing them of the vision and beliefs of the Mothers' Union;
- Works closely with the parish priest to encourage new members and keeps the parish aware of what the branch activities within the parish and community;
- Chairs regular meetings and keeps business as concise as possible. Periodic executive meetings expedite monthly business;
- Leads or delegates the worship service if the priest is not present;
- Appoints and collaborates with a committee to plan the year's programs, as desired;
- Attends Diocesan Council meetings, where there is one, and is a voting member on Diocesan Council;
- Is a voting delegate at biennial and national conference biennial meetings; appoints a proxy if unable to attend;
- Ensures that the annual forms are completed and returned to the Canadian Council Secretary, Treasurer or Link Coordinator as designated on the form.

Co-Branch Leaders

This position is optional, but helpful when a special job needs doing or the Branch Leader needs assistance. Two members may share the role of Branch Leader when there is difficulty filling the position. Only one Co-Branch Leader has the vote.



Branch Secretary

- Transcribes and maintains the minutes;
- Provides monthly meeting notices for church bulletins;
- Assists Branch Leader with notices and year-end reports;
- Responds to correspondence.

Branch Treasurer

- Opens and maintains a bank account. Two signing officers are recommended and may be mandatory in some dioceses;
- Collects yearly membership dues, and forwards the appropriate portion to the Diocesan Treasurer, or to the Canadian Treasurer if there is no Diocesan Council;
- Deals with any donations to the NCFE, the Overseas Development Fund and any other donations.

Branch Literature Coordinator

- Keeps a supply of literature on hand such as service and worship books, membership cards and pins. Some branches maintain a branch lending library;
- Receives orders of materials required by the branch such as Mothers' Union diaries, Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday and baptism cards, and submits the order to the Diocesan or Canadian Literature & Marketing Coordinator.

Branch Link Coordinator

- Maintains regular contact with a link or links on behalf of their branch via mail, telephone, online options (email, text, live stream, etc.);
- Maintains contact and builds a relationship with branch links by sharing information/ideas; partnering in events/activities; praying together; offering support and encouragement; sending cards and letters at Christmas and/or Easter and other occasions as appropriate;
- Requests branch to sign up with the link program through the Canadian Link Coordinator. [Request a Link \(google.com\)](#);
- Notifies the Canadian Link Coordinator when not able to connect with their link;
- Utilizes Link Information, tools and support provided on the Canadian Mothers' Union website, https://canadianmothersunion.ca/canadian_links.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Finances

The Canadian Mothers' Union is not a parish fund-raising organization, but a branch must be self-supporting and make its contribution to the Diocesan, National and Worldwide Society.

Canadian Mothers' Union members have a responsibility to support the Northern Clergy Families Fund, the Make a Mother's Day campaign and the Overseas Fund.

Enrolled members are responsible to pay annual dues. These dues shall be collected in the fall of each year. A portion of these dues remains at the branch level. The portion remaining is sent to the Diocesan Council Treasurer, who will retain a portion; the remainder then forwarded to the Canadian Treasurer. If there is no Diocesan Council, these funds are forwarded directly to the Canadian Treasurer. The Canadian Treasurer keeps a percentage, and the remainder is sent to Mary Sumner House. The dues should be received by the Canadian Treasurer by December 1st from all Branches as these monies, along with the Canadian President's Annual Report must be sent to England early in the new year. (*Dues and the breakdown are subject to change at a national conference biennial meeting.*)

A further source of branch revenue is a free-will offering collected during branch meetings to be used for operating expenses. Diocesan and Canadian funds received are used for operating expenses, for example, *postage, paper and telephone.*

Travel Fund

At all Mothers' Union levels there is the necessity to establish a travel fund. This provide for the Branch Leader, Diocesan President or Canadian President (or their designates) to attend special meetings and conferences. A yearly fund-raising project for this purpose is recommended. When branches collect travel funds, a portion is sent to their Diocesan Council who then forwards a portion to the Canadian Council. Maintaining travel funds on the national level is most important as it allows the Canadian President to travel to meetings to represent the Canadian Mothers' Union. All members should support this fund.



Make a Mother's Day

One of the most successful fundraising campaigns to be run in the UK is the Make a Mother's Day campaign to support the centrally administered programs. In 2010 the campaign was initiated in Canada as an annual national fundraiser for the Overseas Fund. Although it is designed to be held near Mothering Sunday in the UK and Mother's Day in Canada, it can be conducted at any time of the year. Two of the cards support the Northern Parenting Program in Canada.

There is also a card that supports the Rev. Debbie Strickland Memorial Fund. Branches can apply for a grant (maximum \$150) to be used to start an outreach project that will be ongoing (for example: buy books/crayons to set up a Mum and Tot Program; purchase gardening supplies to start a Community Garden). See <https://canadianmothersunion.ca/debbie-strickland-fund>

You do not need to buy a MAMD card to contribute to the fund. The Canadian Treasurer manages this fund and provides tax receipts for donations of any amount.

Banners

Banners and standards have been rallying points for religious ceremonies from earliest times, and the Christian Church continues to use processional crosses and banners to this day. A branch banner is a visible token of its members' presence in the parish and at diocesan and national gatherings.

The Canadian Mothers' Union has a wealth of lovely banners. Some diocesan banners date back more than fifty (50) years while others are brand new. Most branches have designed and made their own banners, often incorporating unique features representing their own area.

Mothers' Union banners travel and may go overseas to conferences. When contemplating the construction of a banner, one must consider its weight for carrying and transportation. Choose decent quality materials that will stand handling and rolling, will not fade, and are dry-cleanable. The Mothers' Union color is blue and traditionally banners use blue in their designs, for centuries a color associated with the Virgin Mary. The Mother and Holy Child appear most often but many branches have a "family" logo, or a meaningful emblem (for example - the Canadian Mothers' Union's banner has a maple leaf behind the Mother and Child). The only definite ruling is that a banner should bear the name of the parish or diocese and the words "Mothers' Union" or the



Mothers' Union logo. Another important item to remember is that lightweight collapsible poles, a light stand and a strong banner carrying case should be purchased.

When a branch closes, its banner remains in the parish church, if desired. If it cannot remain in the church but is in good repair, it could be sent to the diocesan archives where applicable. A banner is blessed, so if it must be disposed of, then it must be reverently burned.

The Canadian Mothers' Union Banner showing the Virgin and Child against a maple leaf background with the coats of arms of the Canadian Dioceses was made in England in 1950 – 1951 (a year and a half in the making) and paid for by small donations from all Canadian members who raised the then exceptionally considerable sum of \$ 600. In 1951 the banner was displayed for six (6) months at Festival Hall, London, during the Festival of Britain, then dedicated in 1951 at St. Alban's Church, Winnipeg.

Due to the deterioration of the Canadian Mothers' Union banner, a travel banner was commissioned in early 2008 by the Mothers' Union Canadian Council of the time. A digitally created copy of the Canadian Mothers' Union banner was developed by Harriett and Stephen Taylor of Giclee Art Print. Joanne Barfitt, a Diocese of Fredericton Mothers' Union member, finished the banner with machine and hand embroidery.

The travel banner was blessed at the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 2009, at St. James' Anglican Church in Vancouver. This banner may travel with the Canadian President whenever she attends meetings on behalf of the Canadian Mothers' Union.

At the 2012 national conference biennial meeting, the original Canadian Mothers' Union banner was retired to St. John's Cathedral, Winnipeg, Diocese of Rupert's Land, and the travel banner became the new Canadian Mothers' Union banner.

Programs

Programs, whether they be presented at the Branch, Diocesan or National level must be chosen with the Aim and Objectives in mind. Mothers' Union is devotional and educational in nature. Mothers' Union is a loving support group, a source of strength to the parish and a "springboard" for personal commitment in the Church and in the community. Programs are important and should



address the needs of different age groups within a branch. Specific programs can be held occasionally for the whole congregation or for families. There is always a place for celebrating together. A supper for spouses, family picnic or other outings are encouraged as additions to programs.

When planning a program, resources within the community, parish, diocese as well as those as part of the Mothers' Union Literature Department should be considered. The following are some suggestions:

- The Objects are for Living by Sheila Maspero (a study of the five objects)
- Resource books on Mary Sumner, her history and the beginnings of Mothers' Union
- The work of the Mothers' Union overseas <https://www.mothersunion.org/>
- Spiritual topics, Community and family life issues, etc.
- Consult the Canadian Mothers' Union website for further topics for discussion <https://canadianmothersunion.ca/program-idea>

Mothering Sunday

The tradition of Mothering Sunday developed from the Christian custom of attending the individual's Mother Church on the fourth Sunday in Lent, for the purpose of thanksgiving for parents and home. In the Middle Ages, halfway through Lent (called Mid-Lent Sunday), it was a time when children came together from their various workplaces to attend church with their family, bringing small gifts to honor their mothers. On this Sunday, cakes and sweets were eaten thus breaking their Lenten Fast. This may explain the alternative name for this day called '*Refreshment Sunday.*'

As time went on, Mothering Sunday lost some of its importance and was not widely observed. In 1912, the daughter of a Nottinghamshire vicar, started a movement to revive some of the religious customs connected with the fourth Sunday in Lent. She encouraged the local clergy to keep Mothering Sunday in their churches. Over the years, this observance has grown, and, in this country, it has become an accepted date in the church's calendar and is marked by a service of thanksgiving. On this day, many Mothers' Union branches take part in the church service, serve the traditional simnel cake or cookies, give Mothering Sunday cards or distribute flowers.



There is a tendency these days for people to think of '*Mother's Day*' and forget the importance of '*Mothering Sunday*'. Mother's Day originated in the USA in 1914, when President Woodrow Wilson passed a bill officially recognizing the second Sunday in May as a National Day of Observance for mothers. See https://canadianmothersunion.ca/mothering_sunday

Lady Day

Lady Day is the day to acknowledge the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrating the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary in her home in the hill village of Nazareth. God sent Gabriel to tell her that she had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). In the early Christian Church, December 25th was chosen as the date for the birth of Jesus and thus, March 25th became the date to recognize the Annunciation (the conception of Jesus).

Pictures and statues of the Mother and Holy Child have been a part of Christian art from early times. When Mary Sumner started the Mothers' Union, she naturally chose this age-old symbol of motherhood for the society. A service booklet for Lady Day is normally published by Mary Sumner House annually. Certain dioceses throughout Canada have a Lady Day service and many branches celebrate corporate communion at their branch services, during the month of March. The collection received during these services have been earmarked for donation to the Overseas Fund.

Secret Prayer Friends

The custom of choosing secret prayer friends in parish branches originated from a branch in South Africa. The main purpose of having secret prayer friends is to remember them in prayer. Your secret prayer friend should be prayed for daily, and should be remembered at special times throughout the year with greeting cards, and especially in times of need such as illness, bereavement, new baby etc.

Most branches choose their secret prayer friends each December. Members randomly select a member's name which includes their address, birthday, anniversary and other pertinent information (making sure not to draw their own or previous year's member). This name is not revealed to anyone, except to someone who offers to keep a master list in order to notify someone of their prayer friend's illness or other news. At the end of the year, usually the annual Christmas gathering, secret prayer friends are revealed. Some dioceses have prayer partners who are not secret but are prayed for similarly as secret prayer friends.



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'S PERSONAL PRAYER

WRITTEN IN 1876 BY MOTHERS' UNION FOUNDER, MARY SUMNER

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

