

# **CANADIAN MOTHERS' UNION**

Christian Concern for Families Worldwide



## **HANDBOOK**

*July, 2016*

*[www.canadianmothersunion.ca](http://www.canadianmothersunion.ca)*

## THE VISION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES, AND VALUES

The Mothers' Union is the world's largest and most widely spread Christian family society. It came into being 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 our work.

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

Our 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 favourable 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. Our governance, leadership and programs are undertaken and driven by members within their own communities worldwide.

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## **MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS**

Enrolled membership is open to any Christian baptized in the name of the Trinity, both female and male 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 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. 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 together the mothers of the parish to form a group who would 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, had to take over. 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. The women of the Royal Family have always been supporters of the society and Her Majesty, The Queen, is its patron. In its 140<sup>th</sup> year, 2016, Mothers' Union has over 4 million members in over 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, 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. Many 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 complimented 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, 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 up 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 they were supported by a number of 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 Central Council in England and with each other. This committee promised to

promote the work of Mothers' Union in Canada in every possible 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 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. There was also a re-establishment of several diocesan councils and a steady growth in membership. As of June, 2016 eleven dioceses had branches, but the number of branches and membership declined nationally, there being 608 paid-up members in 43 branches.

## **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, including Mothers' Union Enterprises (MUE), a successful marketing company which generates a percentage of the general funds, are located in this building. MUE is now offering online shopping at [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org). It also houses a chapel (where Midday Prayers are said daily), meeting rooms, a comfortable members' parlor, bookshop and conference facilities.

## **WORLDWIDE OUTREACH**

The Action and Outreach Unit (formerly called the Overseas Department) is responsible for all those far-flung areas where membership is enthusiastically large but where money and trained leaders are scarce. This unit administers the 'Overseas Development Fund', which provides monies for Mothers' Union workers, their means of transport, grants to help start income generating projects, conferences and much more. Three programs are centrally administered: the Literacy and Development Program, the Family Life Program and the Worldwide Parenting 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 Faith & Policy Unit supports these initiatives and produces educational materials and the Prayer Diary pages for Families Worldwide, an informative magazine published twice a year by MUE. This magazine gives a wonderful view of Mothers' Union projects, news, problems, and involvement of Mothers' Union workers in the worldwide Mothers' Union. It includes the Prayer Diary, Wave of Prayer, profiles of Mothers'

Union's work in countries around the world, plus news from Mary Sumner House and a letter from our Worldwide President to members.

\*\*\*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', 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 (NCF). 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 Objects. With the co-operation and approval of the then Primate, Archbishop Ted Scott, the fund was started in 1974, with a gift of \$25.00 from Mrs. Bea Fitzer of Calgary. The Northern Clergy Wives Holiday Fund, as it was then called, hoped to raise \$200.00 to \$300.00 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.

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 NCF Coordinator explaining this fund in greater detail.

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 NCF. This left the principal intact to keep producing a return. In 1983 a gift of \$600.00 from the Missionettes, Diocese of Rupert's Land was added to the principal investment bringing it to \$1,600.00.

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 of November 2002, a motion was put forth by Ethel Nelson to re-name the trust fund. It was to be called The Sarah Marshall (Northern Clergy Families Fund) Trust Fund.

The brief discussion of this information during the business meeting of the Conference in May led to the question as to who was Sarah Marshall. After some research in the history files and a conversation with Elspeth Newton, it was found that during the early 70s 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 90s, leaving behind her 2 daughters, Phyllis and Joan. Many thanks to Barbara Goode of the St. Stephen's, Calgary branch for the memories and photo 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 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 days, the Worldwide Wave of Prayer links the Mothers' Union in a continuous chain of prayer around the world.

## **CANADIAN WAVE OF PRAYER**

The Canadian Wave of Prayer also changes every five days and reminds us to say prayers for our Canadian branches and other individuals. The Canadian Secretary is responsible for updating the Canadian Wave of Prayer. This prayer list is available online.

## **MIDDAY PRAYERS**

Mothers' Union members are encouraged to say Midday Prayers each day. They can be found online and in the yearly Mothers' Union Diary remembering 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.

N.B. 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, carries out its affairs in a proper manner, including the use of its funds in line with the purposes for which the charity was established.

The 22 member Board consists of the Worldwide President, five Provincial Presidents from the CWISY Provinces (the Provinces of Canterbury, Wales, Ireland, Scotland and York), a Provincial Representative Trustee, four Unit Coordinators, and 11 General Trustees.

In February, 2012, at a Board of Trustees meeting, it was agreed to expand the worldwide membership on the Board. To achieve this, the provinces in the three existing zones were redistributed into six new zones. Each zone would elect a Trustee to be a General Trustee, NOT representing the zone

#### **Zone 1**

Provinces of Central Africa- Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe; Southern Africa- Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia; Indian Ocean- Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles

#### **Zone 2**

Provinces of Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya

#### **Zone 3**

Provinces of Burundi; Congo- DR Congo and Congo Brazzaville; Rwanda; Sudan- Sudan and South Sudan; Jerusalem & The Middle East- Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Ethiopia

#### **Zone 4**

Provinces of Nigeria; West Africa- Sierra Leone, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Cameroon

#### **Zone 5**

Provinces of Australia; Canada; UK & Ireland- England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Scotland, Wales; Europe- Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Italy, Malta & Gozo, Netherlands, Portugal & Madeira, Spain & Canary Islands and Switzerland; Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia- New Zealand, Tonga

#### **Zone 6**

Provinces of USA; West Indies- Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Dominica,

Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica & Cayman Islands, Montserrat, St Maarten, St Eustacious and Saba, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago; Southern Cone, Peru, Uruguay, Argentina; Brazil; India; Korea- South Korea; Melanesia- Solomon Islands, Vanuatu; Myanmar; Thailand; Papua New Guinea; Sri Lanka

Charity law in England and Wales demands that the majority of the members of the Mothers' Union Board of Trustees, its governing body, must come from England and Wales. Trustees from Ireland and Scotland are treated as 'overseas trustees'.

### **Who Are The Electorate?**

The electorate for the Board of Trustees varies depending on the role. The Worldwide President, the Unit Coordinators, the Unit Committees, and the General Trustees are elected by Worldwide Council.

The CWISY Provincial Presidents are elected by their respective Diocesan Presidents.

The Provincial Representative Trustee is elected by the Provincial Presidents from around the world, excluding the Provincial Presidents of CWISY.

### **Who Are On The Worldwide Council?**

Members of Worldwide Council comprise the following:

- The Board of Trustees
- All Provincial Presidents outside of CWISY
- All Diocesan Presidents worldwide
- 26 Representative Members
- Past Central/Worldwide Presidents

Worldwide Council meets twice a year to hear presentations of interest to members. It has no legal accountability for the affairs of the Society. This is vested in the Board of Trustees.

Representative Members are elected by Incorporated Members. They represent members' interests at Worldwide Council. Incorporated membership is open to those members who have been a member of the Mothers' Union for at least a year, and have held office in the Mothers' Union. They pay an extra subscription (largely to cover the additional postal costs of the elections). Most Incorporated Members are in the CWISY Provinces. It is hoped that there will be more incorporated members worldwide over time.

### **Canadian Structure**

The governing council of Mothers' Union in Canada is called the Canadian Council. It operates for a four-year term of office rotating to different dioceses across the country. Usually the council meets at least five 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 and Recording and Corresponding Secretaries. 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 Canadian Council. 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 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 Canadian Council. The elected executive and appointed coordinators are similar to those on 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 years with an optional two year additional term.

## **Closure of a Diocesan Council**

If a Diocesan Council can no longer fulfill its role in carrying out 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 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 keep in touch with scattered branches that have no Diocesan Councils in their area, to work where necessary with existing councils to spread Mothers' Union information, and generally 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. A grant is given in the autumn of each year by Canadian Council to cover postage and communication costs.

## ***Branch Structure***

A Branch can only be formed in a parish with the consent and full co-operation of the incumbent cleric (priest or deacon). 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 from a Mothers' Union service book and led by the priest or a member. Some branches meet in homes using the service book.

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 & Marketing Coordinator. Special coordinators for example, 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 years with an optional two-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 biennial meetings.

Canadian Council consists of the elected executive, including the appointed Chaplain, the elected and appointed coordinators, the Past President, Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Representatives, who have a vote at Canadian Council meetings.

## **PROXIES**

All voting delegates at any level can appoint a proxy (a person who is 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, they shall have an information night with a representative from Diocesan Council, a Diocesan Representative or a Branch Leader present 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 meetings is recommended before enrollment, but a longer period of six months to a year is more beneficial. The initial enrollment of a branch should, if possible, take place at a Sunday morning service, and the candidates and new 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 have always been 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 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 of time, and if the branch is not reactivated, the branch may be closed after consultation with Diocesan Council.

### **Closure**

If it is felt for reasons of age, lack of members or the inability to carry out the work of the Mothers' Union, that a branch wishes to close, the Diocesan President or the Canadian Council shall be consulted. It is

advised that three 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.

## ***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. She corresponds with them, receives their yearly dues, sends them newsletter subscriptions and encourages them to attend conferences, if possible. 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 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.

### ***Diocesan Members***

Diocesan Members are members who 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**

All positions in the Canadian Mothers' Union are open to both women and men, but since it is more common for women to fill them, the pronoun "she" has been used throughout all job descriptions.

### ***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.

1. As a member of Worldwide Council, she is entitled to attend these meetings held twice a year in England, the Provincial Presidents' Conferences, and the special Regional Conferences whenever they are held.

2. She writes a yearly report on the state of Mothers' Union in Canada to Mary Sumner House.
3. She chairs the Canadian Council meetings at least five times a year.
4. She arranges for council members to attend via Skype.
5. She oversees conference planning with the Conference Coordinator and council members and chairs the business sessions of both biennial meetings.
6. She represents Mothers' Union within the Province (Canada) and supports the Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Representatives. She may visit the dioceses during her term of office.
7. She writes a message for each newsletter.
8. She responds to all emails.
9. She answers any queries from the website.
10. She corresponds with the webmaster to update all the material on the website, delete all dated information and add new material as it occurs. A website coordinator may be appointed to look after the website if there is a member available.
11. She is responsible for the Canadian banner and decides where it should be displayed in her diocese and makes sure that the banner is insured.
12. She keeps the Conference banner and makes sure the blue conference block is completed with the date and place of the national conference.
13. She attends the National Anglican Church Women Presidents' & Coordinators' Conference.

## ***Past Canadian President***

The Past President has no job description but has a vote on Canadian Council. The 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 as she must be prepared to fill in whenever and wherever the President is unable to do so. She must be able to carry out the duties of the President in the event that she is unable to complete her term of office. She takes an active role in all aspects of council work and perhaps chairs committees or special projects. The role of Corresponding Secretary is often filled by the Vice President.

## ***Recording and Corresponding Secretary***

The Secretary can perform both roles or the position can be filled by two individuals.

1. The Secretary, with the President, prepares the agenda for each Canadian Council meeting and a week prior to the meeting sends it out to council members, including Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Representatives.

2. She records the minutes of Canadian Council meetings, executive meetings and any special meetings.
3. She sends out copies of council minutes to all members of council after the meetings. Once the minutes are approved at the next council meeting, she sends these approved minutes to the Council members and the Provincial Representative Trustee.
4. She maintains the Canadian Directory, mailing lists, the Canadian Wave of Prayer, and updates the Canadian By-laws as changes are approved.
5. At least 45 days prior to the biennial and national conference biennial meetings all motions and amendments which will be presented at the meetings will be sent out by the secretary to all voting delegates, i.e. the National Organization.
6. The Secretary compiles the report and conference books prior to biennial and national conference biennial meetings.
7. She sends out the annual forms in October to all Branch Leaders (or representatives) in time for completion by December 15 of the current year. She compiles the information gathered.
8. She may assist the President with year-end reports.
9. The Corresponding Secretary attends to all correspondence as directed by the President.

## ***Treasurer***

1. The Treasurer is responsible to open and maintain bank accounts to cover monies received and paid out. She keeps an up-to-date ledger (computer and hard copy). Mothers' Union bank accounts should have three signing officers, and two of them are required to sign all cheques. She records all receipts and expenditures, crediting or debiting each to the proper account.
2. Official Income Tax Receipts (stamped with the charity registration number) are 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, Northern Parenting Fund and Rev. Debbie Strickland Memorial Fund. General receipts may be issued in other cases.
3. She 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.
4. She handles all annual fees (membership & newsletter), and all donations.
5. She sends any donations made to the NCFE to the NCFE Coordinator to distribute. She oversees all donations to the NCFE and requires regular statements from the NCFE Coordinator.
6. She receives the Lone Member Annual Dues.
7. At year-end along with the President's Year-end Report she sends the portion of dues owed to Mary Sumner House in pounds sterling note.
8. Semi-annually she completes and files a GST/HST claim form to recoup 50% of all taxes paid by Mothers' Union.
9. She also submits at the end of the fiscal year the annual Registered Charity Information Return to Canada Revenue Agency. It must be accompanied by the Annual Financial Report. After the Return is completed in her fourth year, she sends the new Treasurer's information to Canada Revenue Agency.



10. In June and at year-end she sends all Overseas Development Fund donations (including Lady Day and Make a Mother's Day campaign donations) received during the year in pounds sterling to Mary Sumner House.
11. She sends to Diocesan Representatives a \$50 allowance between October and December each year.
12. She keeps a file of all receipts, disbursements, correspondence, etc. along with a list of NCFE donors.
13. She is responsible for insuring that after the fourth year the books are audited.

## ***Literature & Marketing Coordinator***

The Literature & Marketing Coordinator is responsible for opening and maintaining a bank account and a literature account with Mary Sumner House. A sum of money may be deposited in the account from the Canadian Treasurer as a float but the coordinator is responsible for seeing that the prices are adjusted to reflect taxes and postage so that she breaks even. Because our membership is small and MSH publishes in tens of thousands, it is practical for her to buy from MSH although some items of Canadian content are printed in Canada. She keeps a good supply of literature on hand at all times, i.e. service books, worship books, membership cards and pins, and current publications. She displays literature at the Biennial meetings. With the council members' approval she can suggest creation of Canadian merchandise for the biennial Meetings such as pens, T-shirts, fridge magnets, etc. which she thinks will sell. Initial layout for this merchandise should be paid for by the Canadian Treasurer under biennial meeting expenses but should not be cost into the registration fee as they will be sold throughout the year. Because of strict copyright no Mary Sumner House merchandise may be photocopied or reproduced.

## ***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. The Chaplain is invited to lead the worship portion of Canadian Council meetings and take part fully in the agenda item discussions and lead special services organized by Canadian Council. The Chaplain arranges the worship portion of the biennial and national conference biennial meetings. She should be available for the support of all council members through mentoring.

## ***Newsletter Editor***

The Newsletter Editor is responsible for compiling and publishing the Canadian Newsletter three times a year. A subscription form is sent to all branches, via the annual council mailing, requesting the number of branch members and the address to which the newsletters are to be sent. All members are subscribers as it is included in their annual membership dues. It is recommended that the Newsletter Editor opens her own bank account and requests from the Canadian Treasurer a sum of money she estimates will be required for

each mailing and she pays the bills for printing and mailing. The editor mails the newsletters to each branch, to each Diocesan Bishop, to worldwide contacts and to any courtesy copies as directed by Canadian Council. The Lone Members Coordinator sends to the editor the number of newsletters required and a package is sent to her for distribution. The editor sends a few newsletters to the NCFF Coordinator for distribution to recipients during that year.

All members are encouraged to contribute articles and photographs. Diocesan Presidents and Representatives especially are asked to send reports on any diocesan events and Council Coordinators are encouraged to report on any interesting information that comes their way. Each edition should contain area news but this is dependent on the dioceses sending it.

## ***Historian***

The Historian is responsible for keeping history books up to date and photocopying all fragile material. She also encourages diocesan and branch groups to maintain history books and photo albums and to send pertinent information to her for inclusion in the history books, especially entries for the Book of Remembrance. Historical information should be carefully filed and readily available. She is responsible for storage of all historical materials required for insurance riders and to retain copies of Canadian Council minutes, newsletters and all conference reports which are sent to the archives at the end of her term of office. She is responsible for ensuring that a donation of \$100 is sent to the archives. Consultation with council is suggested before deciding which materials should go to the archives. She displays the history books at conferences and maintains and updates them as information is supplied.

## ***Link Coordinator***

The Link Coordinator is responsible for arranging, updating and maintaining correspondence links between branches in Canada and between Canadian and international branches. These links are created by being in contact with the link coordinators for each diocese, district, region or country. Correspondence with these coordinators consists of a yearly update of changes in links, obtained through the annual council mailing. The Link Coordinator may have to investigate when a Canadian branch no longer hears from an international branch or vice versa. When a request for a link arrives from an area, the coordinator matches this request from her master list, thus completing the link circle. Ideally each Canadian branch should have one Canadian and one or more international links. These links can be maintained by surface mail or email.

## ***Lone Members' Coordinator***

The Lone Members' Coordinator is responsible for keeping in contact with those members who do not have a branch in their area, who are unable to attend branch meetings, or are Diocesan Members. Communication through mail, email, subscriptions to the newsletter and seasonal greetings keeps these

members in touch and updated with the society. She is the Lone Member's voice on Canadian Council. At the beginning of each year she is responsible for collecting their membership dues which she forwards to the Canadian Treasurer. She sends the number of newsletter subscriptions required to the Newsletter Editor. She makes sure that copies of all motions to be discussed at biennial and national conference biennial meetings are made available to Lone Members who are responsible for informing her as to their voting wishes.

### ***Northern Clergy Families' Fund (NCFF) Coordinator***

The NCFF 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, but special requests from Bishops are considered. The coordinator manages her own bank account and any donations sent to the Canadian Treasurer are redirected to her. She must keep a detailed record of all donations received and from whom, and how many gifts are sent out and to which diocese and names of individual recipients. This information must be sent to the Canadian Treasurer in order for her to make an annual report to Revenue Canada.

The coordinator ensures that 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 in due course. These contributions are redirected as soon as funds permit. The coordinator writes to the Bishops in the Council of the North on a rotation basis, seeking the names and addresses of two recipients from each diocese who would benefit from this fund. Regular reports are submitted to Canadian Council meetings as well as submissions to the newsletter. An annual report is submitted to the Primate. A courtesy newsletter may be sent to each recipient. It is the responsibility of every Mothers' Union branch to support this fund as it is our first national project. Brochures are available from the NCFF Coordinator and information is found on the website.

### ***Conference Coordinator***

The Conference Coordinator is responsible for organizing the national conference taking place in her diocese. As the Chair of the planning committee she invites members at large to volunteer to serve on this committee. A manual is in the possession of the Conference Coordinator.

### ***Additional Coordinators***

Coordinators for other positions on Canadian Council, for example social action, may be appointed as necessary. In order to fulfill objectives four and five it is hoped Canadian Council members will provide, either through email or the newsletter, regular up-to-date articles to keep members informed on social justice issues.

## ***Term of Office***

The Canadian President, Vice President, Corresponding and Recording Secretaries, the Treasurer and Coordinators of Canadian Council are elected at the national conference biennial and the National Chaplain is appointed by of the Diocesan Bishop of the diocese where the Canadian President resides. Additional coordinators are appointed. All serve a four 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 carry out 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 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 president is responsible for maintaining a link with Canadian Council and keeps branches informed as to what is happening. She chairs Diocesan Council meetings. She is also responsible for staying in touch with her Diocesan Bishop and keeping Mothers' Union visible in the diocese by contacting and visiting the parish branches. She makes sure there are up to four council meetings and at least one rally, retreat, quiet day or other gathering event for branch members each year. Potential branches should be visited and the President should install new branches when possible. She must present a written report annually to Canadian Council. She should make sure that a report is sent regularly to the Newsletter Editor informing her of diocesan special events. As a member of Canadian Council she is encouraged to attend regular council meetings, especially if they are in her area or on Skype if she wishes.

### ***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, in order to be prepared to assume the duties of Diocesan President in the event the President is away or unable to complete her term. She should be encouraged to chair special committees and carry out the duties of Coordinator for a specific task, such as IMPC or Lone Members.

## ***Secretary***

The Secretary is responsible for all correspondence and maintains Diocesan Council minutes. She also keeps the diocesan directory current and sends updates to all diocesan council members and the Canadian President. She ensures appropriate cards are sent to members in certain circumstances. She assists the Diocesan President with notices and year-end reports.

## ***Treasurer***

The Treasurer is responsible for opening and maintaining a bank account, to cover monies both received and paid out. She collects all dues and donations to funds. She is responsible for sending the apportionment owed to the Canadian Council Treasurer. She sends donations to the Northern Clergy Families' Fund to the NCFE Coordinator. She receives all donations made to the Make a Mother's Day campaign, ensures that appropriate cards are issued and sends the money to the Canadian Treasurer.

## ***Chaplain***

The Diocesan Bishop appoints the Chaplain. The Chaplain supports the council, conducts services, may enroll members and may lead Bible studies and meditations at diocesan gatherings. It is also hoped the Chaplain will seek to challenge the Council on their role as contributors to the church.

## ***Literature & Marketing Coordinator***

The Literature & Marketing Coordinator is responsible for keeping a good supply of literature on hand at all times, including service and worship books, membership cards and pins. She orders the literature supplies from the Canadian Literature & Marketing Coordinator, although in some cases she may order directly from Mary Sumner House. She should be encouraged to set 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 a Diocesan Representative is appointed by Canadian Council. She is the liaison between Canadian Council and her branches and may visit them from time to time. If the branches are close enough, she may arrange a Quiet Day or another function annually to come together. She is encouraged to write articles on diocesan events for the newsletter. She also writes an annual report for Canadian Council and reports for the biennial and national conference biennial meetings.

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS – BRANCH**

According to the Constitution the following positions form the executive of a branch: Branch Leader, Secretary, Treasurer and Chaplain. In some cases where the branch is small in numbers the positions can be combined, e.g. Secretary/Treasurer.

The descriptions may be intimidating at first sight but they are only guidelines, not carved in stone, and should be used with love, discretion and common sense. Any member who accepts an office is entitled to the support of all her co-workers. Some branches ease the work of the Branch Leader by appointing a Program Coordinator to oversee the arrangement of programs.

### ***Branch Leader***

The Branch Leader prepares new members for enrollment, making sure they understand the vision and beliefs of the Mothers' Union. She works closely with the parish priest to bring in and encourage new members and keeps the branch involved in the life of the parish on a spiritual and educational level. She chairs the regular meetings and keeps business as concise as possible. Periodic executive meetings expedite monthly business. She leads or delegates the worship service if the priest is not present and appoints and works with a committee to plan the year's programs. She is responsible to attend Diocesan Council meetings, where there is one, and is a voting member on Diocesan Council. She is a voting delegate at biennial and national conference biennial meetings. She is responsible for filling out the annual mailing forms and mailing them to the respective coordinators.

### ***Co-branch Leaders***

This position is optional, but very 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.

### ***Secretary***

The Secretary is responsible for keeping and maintaining the minutes, providing monthly meeting notices for church bulletins, and assisting the Branch Leader with notices and year-end reports. She deals with any correspondence.

### ***Treasurer***

The Treasurer opens and maintains a bank account. Two signing officers are recommended and may be mandatory in some dioceses. She collects the yearly membership dues, and forwards the appropriate

portion to the Diocesan Treasurer, or to the Canadian Treasurer if there is no Diocesan Council. She deals with any donations to the NCFE, the Overseas Development Fund and any other donations.

### ***Literature Coordinator***

The Literature Coordinator should keep a supply of literature on hand at all times such as service and worship books, membership cards and pins. Some branches maintain a branch lending library. The Literature Coordinator takes 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.

### ***Link Coordinator***

A branch member should be appointed to maintain contact with branch links by sending cards and letters at Christmas and/or Easter and other occasions as appropriate. She may include any pertinent material she thinks will interest the link branches.

## **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 Development Fund.

Enrolled members are responsible to pay annual dues. These dues shall be collected in the fall of each year. A small portion of these dues remains at the branch level. The portion remaining is sent on to the Diocesan Council Treasurer, who will retain a portion and then the remainder is forwarded to Canadian Council. If there is no Diocesan Council then 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 all be received by the Canadian Treasurer by December 1 as these monies, along with the Canadian President's Annual Report have to 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. Diocesan Representatives receive a yearly grant from Canadian Council.

## ***Travel Fund***

At all Mothers' Union levels there is a necessity to have a travel fund. This allows 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 can be organized. When branches collect travel funds, they are asked to send a portion to their Diocesan Councils who then forward 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 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.

Two of the cards offered support the Northern Parenting Program in Canada.

There is also a card that supports the Rev. Debbie Strickland Memorial Fund. The Rev. Debbie Strickland was a member of the North Sydney branch of the Canadian Mothers' Union for 22 years. In 2012, Debbie offered to take on the role of Conference Coordinator for the 2013-2016 term of Canadian Council. As part of her vision for the future of Mothers' Union, she challenged each branch to begin a new, or expand on an already existing outreach project in their community.

Debbie was a woman of faith and answered a call to the ordained ministry. She was ordained in 2011 and served as an associate priest in the parish of St. John the Baptist Church, North Sydney, N.S. After a long and courageous battle with cancer, her death occurred just a few weeks after she attended a Canadian Council meeting on Skype in February, 2016. The Mothers' Union members at Emmanuel Church, Spryfield wanted to send a \$50 Make a Mother's Day (MAMD) sympathy card to the branch at North Sydney – from her former branch, where she had been a member for 10 years, to her current branch. There wasn't a card for that amount, so Ethel Nelson, who designs the MAMD cards for Canada, decided to create a card recognizing Debbie's idea for outreach projects. The money from this card goes to the Rev. Debbie Strickland Memorial Fund. When there is a sufficient amount in the fund, branches will be able to apply for a grant (maximum \$50) to be used to start an outreach project that will be ongoing. For example, to buy some books, crayons, etc. to set up a Mum and Tot Program or to purchase gardening supplies to start a Community Garden.

You don't need to buy a MAMD card to contribute to the fund. Tax receipts will be given for donations of any amount. This fund will be managed by the Canadian Treasurer.



## **Banners**

Banners and standards have been rallying points for armies and 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 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 very large sum of \$600.00. In 1951 it was displayed for six months at Festival Hall, London, during the Festival of Britain and was then dedicated in 1951 at St. Alban's Church, Winnipeg

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

Mothers' Union banners travel and sometimes go overseas to conferences. When contemplating the construction of a banner, one must consider its weight for carrying and transportation. Choose good quality materials that will stand handling and rolling, won't fade, and are dry-cleanable. The Mothers' Union colour is blue and traditionally banners use blue in their designs - for centuries a colour associated with the Virgin Mary. The Mother and Holy Child appear most often but many branches have a "family" logo, or some meaningful emblem. For example, 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 must be sent to the diocesan archives. A banner is blessed, so if it must be disposed of, then it must be reverently burned.

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 Hariett 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, your community, parish, Mothers' Union Literature Department and diocesan resources should be considered. The following are some suggestions:

The Objects are for Living by Sheila Maspero (a study of the five objects)

Families are for Growing by Sheila Maspero (a program resource book)

Resource books on Mary Sumner, her history and the beginnings of Mothers' Union

The Action and Outreach Department (the work of the Mothers' Union overseas)

Resources and books on parenting.

Other resources such as Relationships Matter, HIV/AIDS, HOME and Media Awareness packets.

Examples of community topics - sex education, street proofing, women alone, drugs, pornography, menopause, separation and divorce, blended families, the disabled, the single parent, the elderly, abuse, the law, people communication, community shelters, prison rehabilitation, prejudice, ecology and the environment, etc.

Examples of spiritual topics - the Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer & Book of Alternative Services), marriage, baptism, confirmation, Bible studies, quiet evenings and retreats, PWRDF, NCFE, food banks, hospital visitation, etc.

## ***The Worldwide Parenting Program***

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. A further training was held in 2012 where eight facilitators were trained. 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 of 2016 where eight facilitators were trained.

It is hoped that a similar training of Facilitators will occur in the diocese of the Arctic in the near future. The Parenting manual has been translated into two dialects of Inuktitut.

## ***Mothering Sunday***

Mothering Sunday is celebrated on the fourth Sunday in Lent in many Anglican Churches. This tradition developed into 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, half way through Lent (called Mid-Lent Sunday), it was a time when children came together from their various work places to attend church with their family, bringing small gifts to honour 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.

## ***Lady Day***

Lady Day is the day when we 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 her society. A service booklet for Lady Day, is normally published by Mary Sumner House annually. Some dioceses throughout Canada have a Lady Day annual 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 Development 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 a secret prayer friend is to remember her 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 pick their secret prayer friends each year in December. Each member is required to write her name, address, birthday, anniversary and other pertinent information on a piece of paper and place it in a basket for selection by members. Each member draws a name, making sure they have not drawn their own name nor the name of their previous year's prayer friend. This name is not revealed to anyone, except to someone who offers to keep a master list in order to notify someone of her prayer friend's illness or other news. At the end of the year, usually the annual Christmas gathering, secret prayer friends are revealed. Each member, in turn, is asked to go to her secret prayer friend with a card or small gift, thus revealing who they were. The gifts need not be costly. The gift could be handmade, a craft or preserves, a corsage or a donation to a worthy cause. Some dioceses have prayer partners who are not secret but are prayed for similarly as secret prayer friends with the same gift exchange.

## **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.*