

ST CHAD'S CHURCH, BAGNALL —NEWSLETTER 01.10.23

Harvest is from the Old English word *hærfest*, meaning "Autumn" It then came to refer to the season for reaping and gathering grain and other grown products. The full moon nearest the autumnal equinox is called the Harvest Moon. So in ancient traditions Harvest Festivals were traditionally held on or near the Sunday of the Harvest Moon.

If you can't be in church on Sunday, these are a few snaps to give you a flavour of how our church looks. The arrangements are quite spectacular.

These are just a few of the people who turned up to help decorate the church on Friday.

Barbara would like to thank all who helped and donated the flowers, their time and enthusiasm. The church looks amazing.



A Gardener's Reflection:

First look at the weeds:
Weed out the gossip, weed out the laziness, weed out the indifference and weed out the pride.

Plant five rows of peas:
Patience, peace, promptness, politeness and prayer

Then plant five rows of lettuce:
Let us be faithful, let us be loving, let us be useful, let us be trusting, let us be grateful

Then we can turn to the reliable turnips:
Turn up on time, turn up with a smile, turn up with a new idea and turn up with new determination



Definition of Harvest: the process or period of gathering in crops.

Harvest festivals are celebrations of the food grown on the land. In Britain, we have given thanks for a successful harvest since pagan times. We celebrate this day by singing, praying and decorating our churches with flowers and baskets of fruit and food.

Harvest Festival reminds Christians of all the good things God gives us and makes us want to share with others who are not so fortunate.



I was struck by Kath's words at a couple of the services informing us that all gifts at our harvest service would be going to the foodbank and that they didn't need to be just the basic stuff but that everyone is entitled to a bit of luxury once in a while.

I must admit to getting a bit carried away with this thought. I ordered some nice items (things that I would give as gifts) hand wash, body wash, deodorant and shampoo and conditioner bars, and then, in a flight of fancy, covered boxes, added ribbon and ended up with the three gift boxes below!

I do hope that they can be passed on as they are and it may help to brighten someone's day.



Hello friends—Esther here!

Please forgive my absence of late..... I may be a multi-tasker but I'm a multi-tasker with limitations!

I have to pinch myself when I look back and realise that I started thinking about writing this piece for the newsletter back in July!!! Mum and I had just visited Meerbrook Flower Festival and a particular banner, displayed in the church, caught my attention, prompting me to try and find out more about it.

Since then we seem to have had one thing and then another happening at our end, including Laura going back to work, our newest member of the family turning a big "1", our newest member starting nursery and over the last month, our newest member being poorly with a virus which has now turned into tonsillitis! He's not been a happy bunny! We've also had Laura's birthday, a Christening over in Blythe Bridge, several visitations of my brother from London and a weekend visit from Pete's sister from Guildford. A certain person who you may know has been in the wars after picking a fight with a large boot scraper and the same person fell foul of a horse fly bite last week which turned nasty..... All this plus many occasions where I have been less than "tip-top" to say the least! Anyway, I am sure we all have things going on and times when we think, "Whatever next!" It's just life!

This last week, Laura booked a week's annual leave, hoping to have a complete rest from work and spend some time with the little one..... She didn't envisage exhaustion, existing on a broken 2/3 hours sleep every night because of his illness, and several trips to the GP! Once again—it's life and she has admitted to not knowing what real tiredness was before she was a mother! Thankfully, our little bundle of trouble is now showing signs of great improvement and Laura is managing a little more sleep!

Despite everything being topsy-turvy over here, I thought that I would try and finish off the half-finished write up, feeling especially guilty for my absence when I read last week that Sheila was missing my input. Sorry Sheila!

If you wish to find out any more about the subject matter this week, follow these links:

<https://www.muwinchester.org.uk/history-of-mothers-union/>

<https://www.mothersunion.org/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Sumner

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





Christian Care for Families



I was scratching my head a little this week to try and think of something inspiring to write about! After a bit of hunting around, I discovered that Wednesday 9th August commemorated the life of a special lady within the church—Mary Sumner, the founder of the Mothers' Union. Now I must confess to being a little ignorant when it comes to this organisation—I know that my Nan was a member at Norton church and I also know that Valerie Whittaker was an active member here at Bagnall, but as far as knowing “all the ins and outs” of the organisation myself, I am a little non-plussed—I just know that it is an organisation for mothers! Therefore, by making Mary Sumner my focus for this week, I hope to educate myself in the bargain!

Timeline of events in the history of the Mothers' Union

- **1876** Mothers' Union was founded by Mary Sumner. She wanted to create an organisation for women that brought together both rich and poor, to build a network that would support mothers of all kinds as they brought up their children in the Christian faith.
- **1885** Mary Sumner delivered her first speech. 'Those that rock the cradle rule the world'. She also called for a Mothers' Union founded prayer.
- **1909** Mothers' Union became the largest voluntary women's organisation in Britain.
- **1918** Mothers' Union celebrated women over 30's right to vote by advising members on how to use their vote wisely. 'The vote is a duty we owe to womankind'
- **1952** HM The Queen wrote to grant her royal patronage to the Mothers' Union
- **1965** Away From It All (AFIA) Holiday Scheme for disadvantaged families launched in the UK.
- **1996** At least 125 of our members became priests in the Church of England following the Synod's approval of the Ordination of women
- **2000** Mothers' Union was given consultative status within the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations on issues such as poverty, gender equality and HIV and AIDS
- **2005** Mothers' Union joined the Jubilee Debt Campaign calling for debt relief for the world's poorest countries—members live in 21 of the 52 severely indebted countries.
- **2010** The Union's "Bye Buy Childhood" campaign called on government to ensure that the advertising and marketing industry value children as children and stop exploiting their natural inexperience to pressure their parents.
- **2016** Mothers' Union representatives from across the globe attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) in New York to lobby governments and the United Nations on women's economic empowerment.
- **2018** The Union's charter and constitution were updated to be fit for the 21st century. Mothers' Union started a conversation with thousands of members across the globe to reaffirm who they were and how they should continue to make a difference to lives in the future.
- **2021** The organisation celebrated 145 years of the Mothers' Union and marked 100 years since the death of their founder, Mary Sumner.

"Mothers' Union are the heart and love of the Church"

The Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

So who was Mary Sumner?



Born Mary Elizabeth Heywood on 31st December 1828, near Salford, Lancashire, she was the third of four children. The family moved to Hertfordshire in 1832 where her mother, a deeply religious woman, began holding mothers' meetings. A year after their move, Mary's six-week old brother died and it is thought that her mother's faith, the women's meetings and her brother's infant death may have all inspired her to begin the Mother's Union.

Mary was educated at home and as part of her music education, she travelled to Rome with her mother and elder sister. It was here that she met her future husband, George Henry Sumner, the son of the Bishop of Winchester and a relative of William Wilberforce. The couple were married in 1848, 18 months after George's ordination. They had three children and Mary dedicated herself to raising her family and assisting her husband in his ministry by providing music and Bible classes.

In 1876, her eldest daughter gave birth and Mary was reminded just how difficult she herself had found motherhood. With this in mind, she decided to hold a meeting of mothers in the parish, with a view to creating an environment where mothers could meet with other mothers and receive and/or offer support within the group. In that day and age, her plan was seen to be quite radical since it involved the coming together and mixing of different classes within the support network.

After a rather shaky start with the first scheduled meeting, largely due to excessive nerves on her part, Mary managed to summon up enough courage to successfully lead the second meeting and her brainchild was eventually launched.

The newly formed Mothers' Union was limited to Mary Sumner's parish. However, in 1885 during a church congress in Portsmouth, the Bishop of Newcastle was asked to address the women churchgoers. Since he felt that he had little to say on this subject, he invited Mary to speak in his stead. She was once again crippled with nerves but managed to keep them in check and delivered a passionate speech about national morality and the importance of women's vocation as mothers in changing the nation for the better. Following her speech, a number of women returned to their own parishes and founded mothers' meetings based on Mary's framework and soon after this, the Bishop of Winchester made the Mothers' Union a feature of every parish in the diocese.

The Mothers' Union concept spread rapidly to nearby dioceses and then throughout the UK. Annual General Meetings began in 1893 and three years later, the Mothers' Union Central Council was formed, with the president being the unanimously elected Mary Sumner. By the turn of the century, there were 169,000 members! The Mothers' Union went on to open branches throughout the British Empire, beginning in New Zealand, Canada and India. Sumner lived to lead the Mothers' Union to act in rebuilding the heart of Britain after WWI and saw the first Mothers' Union Conference of Overseas Workers in 1920. She died on August 9th, 1921.

