

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

JANUARY NEWSLETTER



Those who looked at the heading of the last newsletter would have seen November/December instead of the intended December/January. As I have received a number of Christmas related items it seems a good opportunity to send them now while the Christmas Season is still fresh in our minds.



Yesterday I took the Christmas donations to the Fenland Refuge. There were multiple gifts for each of the 9 children and big bags of toiletries etc. for the 7 women. Also, selection boxes for all the older children. (please see the photos attached)

A total of vouchers worth £110 were handed over yesterday.

I would like to add my thanks to all who have donated this year.

In His peace, Sue



Card made by one of the women in the refuge.

Faith In Action – January 24

A Christmas card I received, that is for you all-

To Wish you all a very Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year

We cannot thank you enough for all you do to support women and children fleeing domestic abuse.

The vouchers are a real life-saver at a time when women are feeling at such a low, and that they have “lost everything”. To know that complete strangers are thinking of them, and have donated vouchers to help them, is so heart-warming, not only at Christmas but throughout the year too. You will never know how many people’s lives have been touched.

With endless gratitude, from all the women and children, and from the staff, at Fenland Refuge.

Warmest wishes, Jocelyn.

With it was enclosed a Thank you card-

Dear Mothers Union

I thank you so much for the Amazing Advent Calendar. As a Christian it means a lot in the year I have left everything behind. I thank you.

May God Bless you all!

I pray that if ever you are in need God gives you someone as kind as you.

All the best in life

Thank You

Merry Christmas



From Esther, the Family Worker we have supported this year in Stanground , Farcet and Fletton parishes.

Thank you Mothers’ Union for the generosity of supporting my role all year which has really made an incredible impact on the way we support those in crisis and developing the role within Mary’s Child. I am saddened too to hear that funding next year for my role will be ending, however I believe everything is all in Gods planning.

Thank you for all the items you have donated to us throughout the year. We have given these to the families, and they have been so appreciative of everything, so grateful of the kindness, love and support from the Mothers’ Union.

And, from Rev Carol Avery, founder of Mary’s Child –

We are always so grateful for your amazing donations. We have given much of your bedding, towels and household items to some very needy families. The Chocolate selection boxes and toiletries boxes have gone out with our Christmas food parcels. Thank you so much.

We are so grateful for the financial support that the MU has given for this past year. It has helped so many people. And, by the grace of God we have literally just heard that the National Lottery are going to fund some of our work in 2024. God is good.

This is just a selection of the messages of thanks received. Your generosity to those whose “lives have met with adversity” is so much appreciated.

A Happy New Year to all

Jean

ST. NEOTS DEANERY



The attached photos were taken at St Neots Deanery Advent buffet lunch, which followed a beautiful Advent service of readings and Advent hymns led by Canon Robert Sibson.

Hosted by St Neots branch 37 Mothers' Union members from four branches, spouses and friends, including a group of MU members from St Albans diocese and Maureen, our archdeaconry vice president, this event was held on Tuesday, 5th December in St Neots Parish Church and afterwards in the church room.

A collection was taken for the Mid Cambridgeshire Women's refuge and the money raised will be used for gift tokens for the residents.

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and
on Zoom 10.30am on January 18th**

Hazel Williams

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

BALSHAM BRANCH

The Balsham Branch have sent their Tesco Vouchers to Liz Elson who is delivering them to the mid Cambridgeshire Refuge in early November.

Balsham knitters are still busy knitting squares for blankets and little jumpers and cardigans. Any wool to spare would be gratefully received as our main supplier, a MU member in Linton Mary Spriggs, sadly died in autumn 2023.



STAPLEFORD BRANCH

St Andrew's Stapleford held a Christmas Tree Festival in early December - and this is the tree decorated by a member of Stapleford Mother's Union.

There were thirty trees on display in all. Members of the Branch helped to steward and made cakes for the event, in aid of the Stapleford Warden Scheme.

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union

Charity no. 251394

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

An E-mail from her husband David told us that on 28th of November Esther Yabbacome sadly died.

He said,

'Her passing was peaceful and loving and she knew that I and all our five children were with her. She has been ill for a number of years with complex conditions, but had been taken from her nursing home into hospital a fortnight before with infections to be treated, one of which proved to be beyond her'.

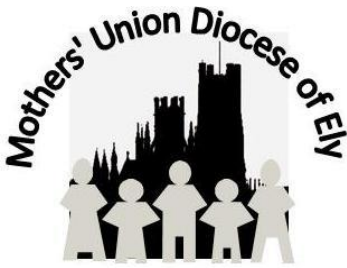
Esther and David were both members of Downham Market Deanery with David taking over the role when Esther could no longer continue as leader.

BURWELL BRANCH

Burwell Branch met at the home of Branch leader Philip Baker where he led the Wave of Prayer Service using a map, prayers, stories and music of the countries who are linked with Ely Diocese. Thanks go to Irene Porter, our Worldwide Links Officer, for putting together the service.

A collection was taken for the MU Christmas Appeal at the November branch meeting and raised £43 (which was doubled by the Big Give) to help group members in Tanzania learn basic business and marketing skills. At the December meeting one of our own members, Christine, gave a demonstration of simple Christmas flower arranging for a table centrepiece.



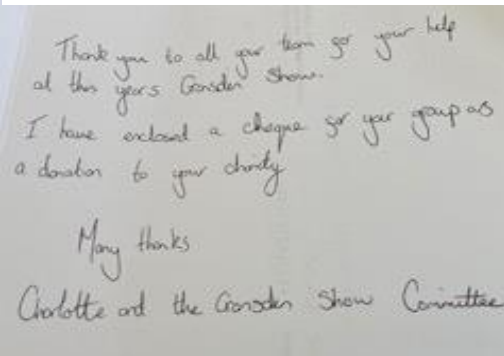


Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

BABY TENT AT GRANDSEN SHOW

We were delighted to receive a donation of £325 to help fund our AFIA holidays. Very generous thanks from the Show for organising an area to help those with young children.



90th BIRTHDAY

Congratulations go to Dora Gale, a member of the Anglesey Branch who celebrated her 90th birthday on Christmas Day 2023. She was presented with a card and basket of flowers from fellow members during the December branch meeting. Dora has been a Mothers' Union member for over 60 years.

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BANNER EXHIBITION FORM.

A form to fill in will be received by each branch with this newsletter. When returned this will give us an indication of who would like to bring their banner to the display in Ely Cathedral during the first two full weeks of August. Please return to me at e-mail address above or by post to 66 Mill Lane, Burwell, Cambridge. CB25 0HJ

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (16th January 2024)

Did you make a new year resolution this year? This is usually a promise to yourself about something you want to do better (or not do at all) but, unfortunately, often fails. Anyone who has read the Old Testament books, such as Exodus, chronicling the Israelites departure from Egypt and wandering in the desert in search of their promised land, cannot fail but be amazed at how often they ask God for something, receive it, promise to follow the law, and fail. Time and time again they wander from God's way, break His rules, suffer the consequences, renew their promises and then repeat their mistakes.

Any rational person would ask: why? Why not go along with God, do it His way and enjoy the clear benefits? But they don't and we are left to be amazed at their apparent obduracy, saying: of course we would be more sensible; we would not stray; we would follow the path on which are guided. But would we? Is there a clue in the way we dismiss our new year resolutions? Obviously there is – in reality we would be no better. Consider for a moment, we know what we are supposed to do and how we are supposed to behave, especially towards others (our neighbours). Do we really live up to those rules, those expectations of God of us and which we promise to adhere to? I know I fall short and I cannot believe I am the only one! I know what I am supposed to do but I come up with excuses and "reasons" for going my own way.

I write these words during the season of Epiphany, the biblical time when Jesus was revealed to the world as the Son of God. One of the consequences for us is that we are charged with passing on the Good News of salvation through Jesus to all our fellow humans. I suggest we challenge ourselves to make a belated resolution to do just that, be a light like the star of Bethlehem, welcoming all who are willing into the fellowship of Christ. Some of us are doing this directly through Alpha courses, but there is a way for all of us to do our bit. Let's see if we can keep this resolution going and make it a habit for the rest of our lives. Amen.

Mothers' Union Membership Subscriptions are £23 for this year. If every branch could recruit one new member more than this year, over £500 would go to help the work of the Mothers' Union.

If you are a taxpayer and therefore able to claim Gift Aid, Ely Diocesan MU would receive £5.75 for each individual. Derek Tye, our treasurer, has sent a form by e-mail to each branch that they can copy for you to fill in if you do not already use Gift Aid. Copies can be sent to branches by post if necessary. This money will go to the taxman otherwise and I would much rather it came to Mothers' Union Projects.

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on
Zoom 10.30am on February 15th**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VWhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

QUIET DAY

Advance notice of the Mothers' Union Quiet Day which will be at Yaxley Church on 21st May, 10am-2.30pm.

Paula Spalding, our Mothers' Union Chaplain will be leading it.

LENT LUNCHESES AT THE CATHEDRAL will be held every Friday in Lent following the 12.10 communion which this year is in St. Catherine's Chapel, (on right as you enter main door). Soup lunch will be in the Cathedral Centre (soup, cheese, bread and fruit). Suggested donation £5. Proceeds to AFIA.

WORLDWIDE NEWS.

Irene Porter - Worldwide link

The annual Bishops and wives retreat took place in Lagos Nigeria in January. With contact still not being made with our links in Nigeria, all we can hope is that of the many photos of the retreat, on the Church of Nigeria Facebook page, some may be of members from Ika and Sokoto. This photo shows a group of Mothers' Union members looking very happy and joyful, and all wearing their Mary Sumner skirts.



COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS. Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **DECEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER:** "Advent – Waiting for Christ". Led by Deirdre Milner.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7W5VF_bZjw

We also have the YouTube video link for **JANUARY THURSDAY PRAYER:** "Transformation – Now!". Led by Hazel Williams.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSgiQEX6Nrc>

ELY CATHEDRAL LUNCHTIME CONCERTS.

If you are coming to Ely Cathedral for Thursday Prayers in February and March, there will be two great Lunchtime Concerts in the Cathedral at 1.10pm.

On February 15th there will be a concert from Stephen Armstrong and Friends, involving 43 singers and a chamber orchestra. Mozart *Piano Concertos 6 & 14*; Tallis *Spem in alium*; Barber *Agnus Dei*.

<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/stephen-armstrong>

On March 21st the Ely Music Collective will present a varied programme of music.

<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/ely-music-collective>

These concerts are part of a series being held weekly on Thursdays during February and March.

Pupils from the King's School Ely will be performing on February 29th and on March 14th.

More info on the Cathedral website: <https://www.elycathedral.org/events>

In the Lady Chapel there is also "A Celebration of Bridal Gowns Exhibition" from 14th February to 17th March. A fascinating exhibition highlighting the history, artistry and allure of wedding dresses over the years.

Entry to the exhibition is included with your Cathedral visitor ticket. Cathedral Pass Holders and Residents of CB6 / CB7: Entry £5 (available in person from the Cathedral ticket office).

Further info: <https://www.elycathedral.org/events/celebration-of-bridal-gowns>

See more about how to apply for a RESIDENTS PASS elsewhere in this newsletter.

ELY CATHEDRAL RESIDENT AND PARISH PASSES

With the upcoming MU Banner Exhibition in the Lady Chapel in August, it will be useful if members were able to gain free entry to the Cathedral to visit the Exhibition, and at other times. If you are not already a Cathedral Friend or have a pass, here is the info about how this works for the different passes.

Here is the link on the Diocesan website: <https://www.elydiocese.org/ely-cathedral-parish-and-resident-passes-6066.php>

Resident Passes.

If you live in the CB6 or CB7 postal area you are entitled to free entry to Ely Cathedral.

Please bring proof of address (e.g. a driving licence or household bill).

The Residents Pass gives you free access to the ground floor of the Cathedral.

Parish Pass Holders.

Ely Cathedral offers free entry for those on the electoral roll of churches in the Diocese of Ely.

To apply for a Pass you will need to complete a form, which has to be signed by your Churchwarden.

Please note: Expired Parish Passes are still valid for entry. There is no need to re-apply.

Here is the link on the Cathedral website: <https://www.elycathedral.org/plan-your-visit/visitor-tickets-and-tours/free-cathedral-entry>

You will be able to download a form on this page where it says "Ely Cathedral Parish Pass application form".

If you are not able to download and print a form, please ask someone in your Branch or church if they can help. If not, please contact Debbie Tye and she will send you a form.

Completed forms can be taken to the Ticket and Information Desk at Ely Cathedral between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Saturday, in order to collect your pass. If you are not able to come to Ely, please send your completed forms to Debbie Tye, and she will obtain a pass for you. Alternatively, if there is a group of you in your Branch wishing to apply, you could do this via a central contact (e.g. Branch Leader).

Debbie Tye (01353 666883 / dmtypost@hotmail.com)

Faith In Action – January 24

Jean Webb 01353 658581 Jmw35n@gmail.com

This lovely letter is for all our wonderful knitters, and for Audrey who sorts, packs and delivers to the Maternity Unit at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital -

Dear Mothers' Union members,

On behalf of all of the staff at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Maternity Unit, I would like to pass on our heartfelt thanks for your kind donation of knitted baby hats that your representative delivered earlier today.

The families we care for really appreciate their babies' being given a handmade hat at birth, and always comment on your beautiful choice of colours and designs. As midwives, we also take great enjoyment from choosing a hat to suit each baby and family.

Thank you again for taking the time to both produce and deliver the hats.

H.J. (Midwife)

Hinchingsbrooke Hospital

North West Anglia Foundation Trust

This photo shows just a selection of the hats and other garments sorted by Audrey.



Also from Hinchingsbrooke -

A plea from the Frailty and Dementia unit for more lap blankets

These are very popular, and patients take them with them when they move. Could you help?

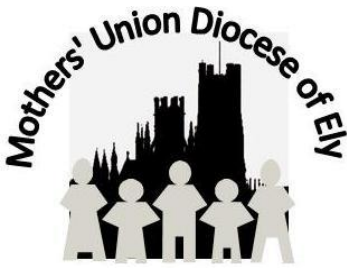
Lap blankets can be between 32 and 40 inches, square or rectangular.

Faith In Action can accept squares as well as completed blankets, 6 or 8 inches preferably. I find the easy way to knit a square is by casting on 2 stitches, increasing at the start of each row until desired length, then decreasing at the start of each row, and finishing by knitting the last 2 stitches together.

The Angel Foundation (previously known as Property Angels) are no longer needing beds, but do want Settees and Chests of Drawers. These are for furnishing homes for abused families. Please message me for more information if you have either item to donate.

Mothers' Union Trustees for Ely Diocese

Please get in touch with me if you would like to know more about being a trustee of the Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union. Many members already do wonderful work but if you would like to be part of the decision-making body of the charity, I would love to hear from you. A number of trustees have to step down at the end of this year as 6 years is the longest you can hold any one of the trustee posts. I will give more information next month but please pray that enough members come forward to have a viable committee of trustees.



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

MARCH NEWSLETTER 2024



Lord, we thank you for inspiring the founders of our branch

To begin our work of love and service here at Ely Cathedral

And we give thanks for all members of the last two decades

Who have enabled our branch to flourish.

Amen

Ely Cathedral Branch

Gail Swanson Branch Leader

We recently celebrated our 20th Anniversary of the Ely Cathedral Branch and held a celebratory tea after our AGM, hence the birthday cake, which was beautifully decorated by our member Sarah Mascall.

THURSDAY PRAYER in Ely Cathedral and on
Zoom 10.30am on March 21st 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84399690933?pwd=uVOgZJOKhdu4yR1ZKebODANtiIJPLC.1>

Meeting ID: 843 9969 0933

Passcode: 835537

This is not the usual ID for Thursday Prayer

BANNER EXHIBITION

1ST – 14TH AUGUST 2024

ELY CATHEDRAL

A reminder to return your forms (sent with February's newsletter) to Hazel if you wish to display your banner.

SPRING DIOCESAN MEETING and AGM

Friday 12th April at St. Peter's Church Hall. March. 9.30am -2pm
9.30am Coffee for a 10am Start

Speaker RUTH NEW Ely Diocesan Development Officer for Children and Families

Displays, MU cards.

Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be supplied

Faith In Action – March '24

As you are aware, during 2023 we were supporting Esther Charlton in her role of Families Support Worker, with Mary's Child, based in Farcet, Stanground and Fletton, on the outskirts of Peterborough, but within Ely Diocese. Esther was a M U member in her Zimbabwe before coming to Britain.

We will continue supporting with collecting household goods and daily essentials. I was asked to remain on the Local Management Group, and I am privileged to do so, and to be aware of the ongoing needs, so that we can, where possible, respond.

Rev. Carol Avery, the founder of Mary's Child writes-

We are so grateful for the financial support that the MU has given for this past year. It has helped so many people. You might like to know that all the recent donations of household items for Mary's Child have now been given to various families in need and they are all so very grateful. The needs of the world are not getting less, but more, and it's wonderful that we can carry some love and joy to those around us who are really struggling.

Esther carries out much needed care of families via food parcels, welfare checks and working alongside families. We hope that her work will continue.

Esther wrote -

Thank you Mothers' Union for having the generosity of supporting my role all year which has really made an incredible impact on the way we support those in crisis, and developing the role within Mary's Child.

We are always pleased to be able to pass on good condition, household items to Mary's Child, the 3 Women's Refuges and 2 young people's hostels we support. Do let Maureen or me know if you can help in this way – contact details below.

Also, if you are having a spring cleaning turn-out, we are running short of knitting wool for our keen knitters. Double Knitting preferable, but other thicknesses are welcome also. Thank you.

Jean Webb

01353 658581

jmw35n@gmail.com

Maureen Haigh

01353 747960

gmaigh@talk21.com

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **FEBRUARY THURSDAY PRAYER**: "Serving Others". Led by Revd Stuart Mitchell.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Er8LHe52MA4>



A REFLECTION – MU – March

This month I write about a true story and what we might learn from it. It has been all over the papers recently but the significance might have been overlooked.

It concerns a 9-year-old boy who was discovered in France to have been “abandoned” by his mother (who went to live with another single mother). She visited him from time to time, but he was basically living on his own. And no-one noticed. For two years he lived alone in a flat with no heating. And no-one noticed. He went to school every day and was “doing well”. So, no-one noticed. He had no friends to notice. He was just an ordinary 9-year-old boy doing nothing wrong and not being noticed by anyone – his neighbours, his teachers, his school companions, the council (the mayor was a nearby neighbour).

But he should have been noticed, someone, in all those two years, should have noticed something was not quite right. Well, of course some people will have noticed but they ignored it. They probably told themselves that if he looked OK, he probably was OK. But he was not OK, he was only 9, a primary school student, living alone! Over those two years he even moved up to a secondary school, and still no-one noticed, or no-one who noticed actually did anything.

When it all emerged into the open, the mayor summed it up “He was really good at school, he did his homework, he was well dressed, he was clean and he was always on time. Kids like that fly under the radar, we don’t worry about them”. But the signs would have been there for anyone who looked.

It is very tempting to judge (unfavourably) those people who allowed this to happen for so long. So many people could have intervened. But in chapter 7 v1-2 of Mark’s Gospel he reports Jesus as saying “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” He continues with the story of the speck in someone else’s eye and the plank in your own. This causes one to reflect on just how perfect we are ourselves. Are we truly attentive to what is happening around us? In our busy lives, would we stop and consider if something that caught our attention needs investigating, or at least reporting as a concern?

I think we know the answer: we pass remote, abandoned petrol stations with “car cleaning” facilities, without a glance. We might even have used them, but have we spoken to the staff to gauge their condition – are they in slavery? We buy cheap clothing and other items at ridiculously low prices, but do we question what we know about the conditions in which they were produced, or do we count our lucky stars at picking up a bargain?

The abolition of modern slavery, child (and adult) abuse and all like things are part of the DNA of the Mothers’ Union. Let us open our eyes and ensure that we live what we preach so that we can, not judge, but report instances which twitch our antennae and make us wonder “is everything here as it should be?”.

Philip Baker

[Give a Gift of Dignity this Mothering Sunday](#)

Will you be celebrating a mother, caregiver or important female role model in your life this Mothering Sunday? How about helping other women and girls around the world stand up against gender-based violence at the same time?

Every member will have received a leaflet and/or an e-mail about helping women by purchasing a Gift of Dignity. Please think about whether you could help this Mothering Sunday.

Worldwide News

Irene Porter, our Worldwide Officer, sends our MU monthly newsletters to all our worldwide links. Esther in Kigali has sent us this so that we know what they have been concentrating on over the last year.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF RWANDA, KIGALI DIOCESE

SOME OF MOTHERS' UNION ACTIVITIES 2023

Induction of New Members

There was induction and welcome of new members into Mothers' Union. The new members altogether were 145 from different parishes that form Kigali Diocese. Parish pastors do the induction ceremony and the Mothers' Union President is normally the guest of honour who hands over the Mothers' Union certificate to the new members. Here are some photos taken during induction ceremony.



Ministry to the vulnerable

Mothers' Union offers support to the vulnerable who include single moms, school dropouts and widows. We teach these women the word of God and by God's Grace some of them have accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and saviour. We also teach them trauma healing because they have been abused and have wounded hearts. We again give them some health materials as seen below.



The Mothers' Union President together with some Mothers' Union staff members, all in blue uniform, handed over jerrycans and clothes in black bags to this group, in the company of their pastor in a black suit.

Bible study classes

Members meet for bible study classes once a week. Every parish has an agreed upon day and time when they come together for prayer and bible study. This is one way of knowing the word of God and members bearing each other's burdens.



Members during bible study class.

GBV Campaign (Gender Based Violence)

It's our role as Mothers' Union to advocate for the end of Gender Based Violence. There is a lot of violence done to women and girls. We offer counselling to the victims of violence, teach women what violence means, the examples of violence and how to prevent it.



This photo was taken during one of the awareness campaigns to end violence performed in homes against women and girls.

Joanna Sanders keeps in contact with our Indoor members and has recently updated me on the list which is now at 12. She has spoken to a number of families as well as individuals many of whom are in their nineties. They will receive Easter Cards and Prayers shortly and a letter which the Worldwide President usually writes, and Joanna remains in contact throughout the year at birthdays and Christmas.

Joanna has carried out this role with great diligence for the last 11 years and I am delighted that she is happy to continue.

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union Charity no. 251394

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

Advance notice of the Mothers' Union **Quiet Day** which will be at Yaxley Church on 21st May, 10am-2.30pm.

Paula Spalding, our Mothers' Union Chaplain will be leading it.

As you will already know there will be no national gathering in 2024, as there was at York last year.

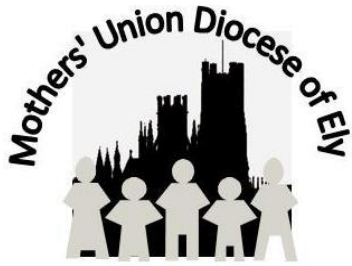
It has been suggested that members from the Canterbury Province might enjoy meeting together. The King's Centre in Oxford will be the venue for the meeting which will take place on Saturday the 22nd June. A few dioceses will share some of the projects or special work they are involved in, there will be other speakers (and an afternoon comedian) and the meeting is open to all members. There is no cut-off date for expressing an interest and many have already done so across the province. Please e-mail [Email: mugathering2024@muoxford.org.uk](mailto:mugathering2024@muoxford.org.uk) if you might be interested in attending.

Work is taking place on ticketing and putting together a package of the day. This is likely to be in March with tickets needing to be bought probably by mid-end May.

It is a difficult date for our diocese as the day before is the Garden Party at the Bishop's Palace, enjoyed by many members. This means I think that few, if any, trustees will go to Oxford on the Saturday but I hope that some members will attend especially if they would not come to the garden party anyway.

An update from Mary Sumner House will be sent with this newsletter. It covers a wide range of national projects and a number of short paragraphs about special dates coming up in the next two months.

Election Literature and Forms will be circulated to all branches later in March. Please consider whether you would like to become a trustee of the Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union. All members, not just branch officers, need to be made aware of this information.



April

Newsletter 2024



INVITATION

WEEKEND RETREAT TO HIGHGATE HOUSE

For Ely Diocese MU members.

Partners welcome.

Share reflective time together, relax together, praise God together

Date: 4.00pm Friday 25th October 2024 – 4.00pm Sunday 27th October 2024

Location: Highgate House, Creaton, Northants (About 1 hour 20 minutes away from Ely on the A14)

About Highgate House: Partner Christian Conference Centre to High Leigh further south. Newly finished Conference Facility in 18th century house set in 7 acres of grounds. Contact me for full details or Google Search Christian Conference Trust on-line, click through to Highgate House. All bedrooms with en-suite facilities.

Price (fully inclusive of accommodation, food, tea/coffee): £251 per person (*no single room supplement*)

Outline Programme (subject to alteration): Friday: Welcome, Tea, Introduction, Dinner, Social time

Saturday: Breakfast, Session 1, tea/coffee, Session 2, Lunch, Free time, Tea, Session 3, Dinner, Social time

Sunday: Breakfast, Communion, Session 4, tea/coffee, Conclusions, Lunch, Free time, Tea, Depart.

I hope to be able to hold Daily Prayer (morning, afternoon, night/compline) throughout.

A deposit of £50 per person will be requested to confirm the booking, payment of balance in stages.

Any questions? Contact Philip Baker, details below.

-0-

Please respond by 12th April latest – *I will contact everyone who replies with payment details*

Please reserve me _____ places **or** I would come on different date / I would come but cannot afford to

Name: _____ Contact detail (phone or email): _____

First 40 applicants guaranteed a place, places after that depend on availability at the Centre

Reply - By post to: Mill Bungalow, Mill Lane, Burwell, Cambridge, CB25 0HJ

By email to: philip.bakerhome@ntlworld.com By phone to: 07758 221704 Philip Baker is Burwell Branch Leader

Have a break from the chores, find spiritual renewal – all in a weekend.



Easter Joy

Thank you to the people of Steeple Morden who donated 50 Easter Eggs which were delivered by Maureen Haigh to Mary's Child who work with families in the north-west of our Diocese.



One of the post boxes in Burwell with a knitted Easter themed cover.



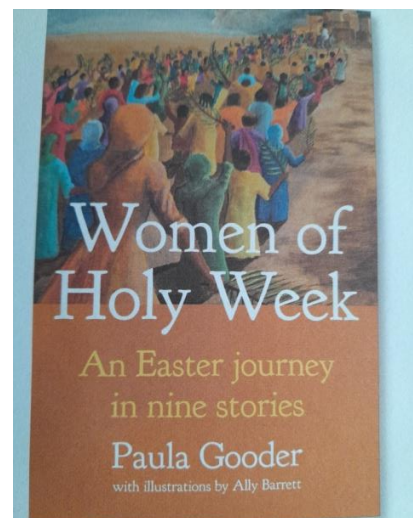
The Newmarket Branch of the Mothers' Union are celebrating their 100th anniversary on 15th May 2024. On 26th May (Trinity Sunday) there will be a parish celebration with a MU-themed Mass at 9.45am in St. Mary's Church, Newmarket, followed by a bring and share lunch. An invitation is extended to those in Ely Diocese too as Newmarket lies so close to the border.

Ruth Ken

Yaxley Mothers' Union March Meeting

"The Women of Holy Week" is a book featured in the Spring/Summer Mothers' Union gift guide. With our March meeting falling just before Palm Sunday we used the stories of four women's experiences of Palm Sunday for our meeting.

Four members read the stories of Miriam, Sarah, Anna and Susannah telling us why they were there, about the crowds, the palm waving and seeing or meeting Jesus. "His love endures forever" occurred in each storey several times, so singing "Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King" which includes those words fitted very well. Hymns followed each of the other stories " I stand amazed in the presence of the Jesus the Nazarene", "From Heaven you came helpless babe" and "My song is love unknown". Requests to borrow the book were made as members found the stories very moving. We would highly recommend using this book for a meeting.



BANNER EXHIBITION

1ST – 14TH AUGUST 2024

ELY CATHEDRAL

A reminder to return your forms (sent with February's newsletter) to Hazel if you wish to display your banner.

A REFLECTION – April

Philip Baker (26th March 2024)

As we reach the tumultuous finale of Jesus' earthly life over Easter, it is a good time to reflect on how the events of over 2000 years ago affect our lives today. The first, and possibly most obvious, thing to say is that the events of that first Easter were not the end, they were the start of a new era, one in which we still play a part today.

The Cross is the enduring symbol of Christian Faith. Among a host of personal interpretations it represents death to our earthly life being just a stage in the achievement of eternal life with God, for those who believe in the Word. Jesus had finished showing us what we had to do to achieve life with Him and He even gave a demonstration by rising to His new life once His work on earth was done. We will soon (at the time of writing) be looking at the events on the road to Emmaus, when Jesus proved this new risen life was possible (see Luke 24:13-35). As we annually remember those momentous events our life continues, but we are changed by living through the memory of Easter.

How did you get on with whatever sacrificial Lent gesture you chose to make – anything from giving up chocolate to spending extra time in prayer or Bible reading each day? Whatever it was that you chose to do was because it felt to be a “good” thing to do. So, if it was a “good” thing to do before Easter, why should it not be a “good” thing after Easter too? How about considering continuing some of these things on beyond Easter and making them a part of a new and better life? Perhaps what you chose does not suit being continued; well, start something else instead that you can build into your life. Anything that makes you a “better” person in the eyes of God, as shown to us by Jesus.

As this habit builds year on year at Easter, making a small adjustment each year to come closer to God's “ideal”, we really will become “better” people, closer to God and more able to look forward with confidence to eternity praising God (see Proverbs 14:14).

Just a thought!

NEWS

Ann Larnar at Grantchester will be 90 on 14th April. She still keeps in touch with the other 3 members at Grantchester ensuring they receive the monthly newsletter, supports MUE and despite poor eyesight knits for the Rosie hospital.

Long term member of Stow-cum-Quy and subsequently Anglesey Group Branch, Margaret Lowe passed away peacefully on 27th February 2024. Our thoughts and prayers are with Colin and family at this time.

Two other attachments will be sent with this newsletter.

One is the Easter Message from Sheran Harper, our Worldwide President.

The second gives details of the Provincial Gathering on 22nd June at Oxford. This is the day after the Garden Party in the Bishop's garden.

**SPRING DIOCESAN MEETING and AGM
Friday 12th April at St. Peter's Church Hall.**

March. 9.30am -2pm

9.30am Coffee for a 10am Start

Speaker RUTH NEW Ely Diocesan Development

Officer for

Children and Families

Displays, MU cards.

Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be supplied

Knitting, Crocheting and Sewing Wish List Spring 24

Project/charity	Requirements
	All items to be made with new yarn.
Ely Baby Bank	Baby hats,- some matching mitts, from prem size up. Cardigans/jackets, especially 6/9//12 month sizes Blankets -cradle to cot size Levi comforters Teddies and dolls – with safety stuffing Occasionally other baby items.
Fenland Family Bank	As above, but up to 5 years old Cardigans - School uniform colours age 4/5
Mary’s Child	Items for all the family Shoe-bag style drawstring bags, for Welcome Bags
Refuges and Hostels	Baby and children’s items (when needed) Winter hats , mitts, scarves – adult/children
Christian Hope International	Warm clothing for all ages Blankets, large enough to wrap around children or adults.
Hinchingbrooke Hospital Maternity Unit	Newborn and 3 month size hats, preferable ribbed design. Not yellow. Cradle size blankets
Hinchingbrooke Hospital Dementia & Frailty Unit	Twiddle Muffs Lap blankets –32- 40 inches. - crocheted triangular ones also as they are good for wheelchair users. Dementia cannula sleeves –as shown here



Patterns are available from jmw35n@gmail.com



Just some of the recently received knitted items sent in for distribution to Hinchingbrooke Hospital and the Baby Banks. These blankets were from Linton. Many thanks to all who are "putting their Faith Into Action" by knitting for our projects.

THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am on April 18th

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdWVHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

Ely Diocesan Mothers’ Union
Charity no. 251394
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897
hwill66@icloud.com



Newsletter May 2024



Crocheted Shawl. We were sent this picture of a beautiful crocheted shawl by a lady who was visiting her sister in Hinchingbrooke Hospital. The shawl with the staircase design had been made by a Mothers' Union member and given to the hospital. The recipient was so pleased with it, she asked her sister to write to us to say "Thank You", and tell us how much pleasure she has had from looking at the beautiful combination of colours and the impressive workmanship. There must have been an MU label on the shawl, so they knew where it came from. A simple way to share the love and care that MU can bring to others.

MOTHERS' UNION GARDEN PARTY

Bishop's Garden, Ely. Friday 21st June. 3-5pm.

Music from the King's School will entertain us.

Bring your own packed tea. Fizz and soft drinks provided.

Raffle prizes will be gratefully received and there will also be an opportunity to buy MU cards and see a display about our worldwide links.

Everyone welcome

Thy Kingdom Come

From 9 - 19 May, we are joining in prayer with more than one million Christians around the world to take part in Thy Kingdom Come. **This year, we're inviting you to do something different.**

From Ascension to Pentecost, we invite you to commit to praying for five friends, and to invite one to a Mothers' Union event.

Other MU Activities for Thy Kingdom Come can be found on the homepage of the MU website.

WISBECH AND NORTH NENE PARISHES BRANCH



At our April Branch Meeting we had speakers from Baby Basics West Norfolk, but they also cover some areas of Wisbech. Baby Basics was founded in 2009 at the King's Centre Church at Sheffield. Referrals come from Health Professionals and other professional bodies. They fundraise to purchase brand new Moses baskets with stands which provide a safe bed to sleep in and are packed full of essentials for a new born to 3 months. These ladies operate from St. Nicholas Church, Dersingham, Norfolk and are shown in the photograph with some of our branch members.

Wendy (Smith) Branch Leader

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (23rd April 2024)

With the reading plan I am following for my daily bible reading I also receive a "Verse of the Day" to contemplate. A couple of days ago this was taken from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 10 verse 31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God". At my last House Group session, we were talking about doing things without thought, just repeating words or actions by rote, simply because we are so accustomed to doing them. This verse should make us sit up and take notice of what we do, because it makes the point by inference that everything we do can be considered as being to the glory of God.

I often find Paul's writings to be obtuse, with meanings obscured in a whirlpool of words making convoluted arguments. This verse could hardly be more direct. Everything we have is because of the grace of God – we are not fearful, hungry and destitute as so many in our world are. Everything we do we are able to because through the grace of God we have the skills to use our hands, make and employ tools and understand how to plan for the future outcome we desire. All thanks to God.

Does it not therefore seem appropriate that we should regard ourselves in that light, as fortunate in ways we cannot control, and possibly do not deserve, through God's bountiful mercy? But we are so used to our good fortune that we do not give it any thought. Instead of being grateful for every mouthful of food, for our warm beds, our safe lives with social services at our backs in case of need, we take it as our due.

Even if it is only for the rest of the day in which you read these words, how about trying to give God His due for everything you experience: the next meal, talk with a friend, item you buy or use, even the flash of pleasure on seeing a shrub in full blossom, or a bird gathering materials for its nest. In thinking about how God has enabled us we will be acting to His Glory, recognising His place in our lives.

WEEKEND RETREAT TO HIGHGATE HOUSE

Share reflective time together, relax together, praise God together

Date: 4.00pm Friday 25th October 2024 – 4.00pm Sunday 27th October 2024

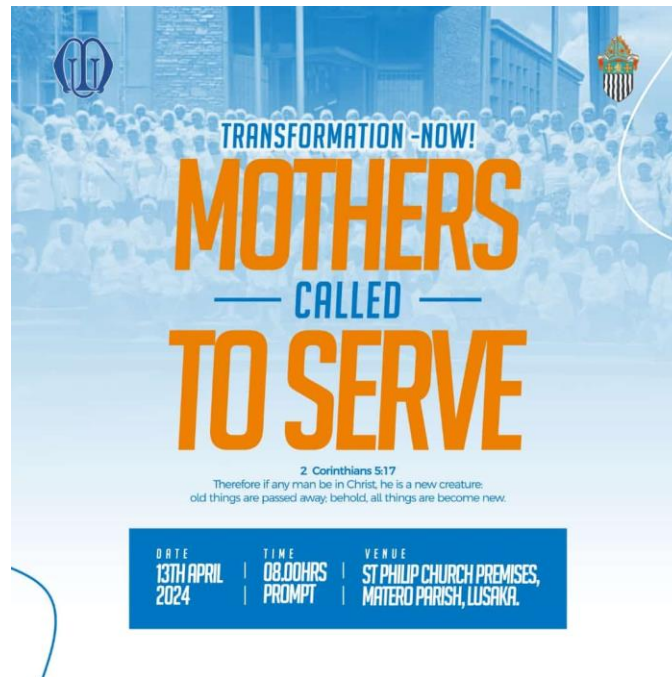
Price (fully inclusive of accommodation, food, tea/coffee): £251 per person (*no single room supplement*)

Details were on the front page of the April Newsletter

philip.bakerhome@ntlworld.com or by phone to: 07758 221704. **£50 deposit must be received by 1st June**

"Transformation Now, Mothers' Called to Service"

On April 13th, members of Mothers' Union in Lusaka Diocese, Zambia, paraded to the venue for a service to acknowledge "Mary's Day" (Lady Day). This is a very important day when the members renew their commitment to Mothers' Union.



ST. NEOT'S BRANCH

St Mary's, St Neot's branch, regretfully reports that we have lost one of our oldest members, Mary Richardson, who died peacefully on 10th April aged 96. Mary was a long term, dedicated member of MU and worshipped at St Neots Parish Church all her life. Serving as voluntary parish secretary for many years, she organised many parish holidays and outings. She was well known to everyone, greeting people at the church door as they left at the end of the services. She also had a ministry to the bereaved when she worked for a local firm of undertakers, and in later years she was much involved at the Thursday Lunch Club run by the Voluntary Welfare Association in St Neots. Mary was a lovely Christian - prayer was a very important part of her life - and was an inspiration to us all. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

We also have a 90th birthday to celebrate. Congratulations to Margaret Gates, 90 on 17th May!

SPRING DIOCESAN MEETING AND AGM

As well as the official business of the AGM and news from task group leaders the talk was given by **Ruth New** who is the **Diocesan Development Officer for Children and Families**. She gave a brief outline of her background and explained that the Archbishop's Council has invested in work with young people with lots of new initiatives. She is working closely with Mike Kelly (Youth Officer) and Revd Mandy Flattery (Missioner for Churches and Schools). There are 85 church schools in the diocese, and they are working with parishes to build links with the schools with initiatives such as the Parish School Covenant. 95% of children have no connection with faith and there are a decreasing number of children in our churches – this is a national trend. The aim of the National Church is to double the number of young people in our churches by 2030. Flourishing churches have more than 25 under 18-year-olds involved in their worship, but not necessarily worshipping on a Sunday. We need to support what is already happening and encourage new activities. We need to know how we can help local parishes to do what is right for them. There is a huge variety of economics in parishes. We need to work with the community that is already there and to value children and young people as equals in the Body of Christ. We need to 1) Grow in Confidence: take small steps to help things grow, to help how we can do things such as set up hubs in deaneries. 2) Grow in Commitment: this requires confidence, pray regularly about what is going to happen. Children's Work should be on every PCC agenda. The Church/School covenant will help. Talk to curates and incumbents regarding their ministry with children and families. Some incumbents have multi parish benefices and so teams to do this can be built within the benefice. 3) Grow in Competence: how do we train for a level of competence to help children grow in faith? There are courses available for core skills, as well as mental health and First Aid training for children and young people subsidised by the diocese. 4) Grow Creativity: learn how to engage with children and families where they are at; develop Messy Church; give opportunities to explore being part of a worshipping community. Faith develops in the home as less time is spent in church. We need to support them, to encourage meaningful relationships with adults and the family; to give confidence to talk about God, Bible Study and Prayer. In order to invite children and families we need safe clean toys and funding is available to buy a small amount of equipment. Resources are needed to enable them to engage with services. (Communion Play sets – children can hold up the chalice with the priest; a trail for the Easter story etc. We need to make sure families feel welcome and offer refreshments. We need to chat about faith in order to move on from toddler groups. Our job is to help the Holy Spirit grow and flourish. We need to meet people where they are and help them feel part of the wider community through "Sweaty Church" and other initiatives. It was pointed out that there is an ALM course in children's ministry and other national training initiatives. There was a comment that safeguarding puts people off but our culture requires this and is part of loving and keeping each other safe. Hazel Williams thanked Ruth and mentioned that there are funds available if churches need it. Keep praying!

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS. Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

We have two new YouTube video links to share with you for Thursday Prayer.

MARCH THURSDAY PRAYER: "Lent" – Led by Chris Holt.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zir5rPSEf5U>

APRIL THURSDAY PRAYER: "Unity" – Led by Philip Baker.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-6xsEGKWWk>

THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am on May 16th

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

MOTHERS' UNION Banner Exhibition

Thursday 1st – Wednesday 14th August 2024

Lady Chapel Ely Cathedral

Weekdays: 10am – 4pm

Sundays: 12noon – 3pm

A unique exhibition of banners and memorabilia from MU branches across the Diocese of Ely celebrating the work of the Mothers' Union

Mary Summer Day Service
on Friday 9th August at 11.30am
in the Cathedral Presbytery

CONTACT:
www.elydiocese.org/mothers-union
www.elycathedral.org
Further information from:
MUelyDiocese@hotmail.com



BANNER EXHIBITION

1ST – 14TH AUGUST 2024

ELY CATHEDRAL

A reminder to return your forms (sent with February's newsletter) to Hazel if you wish to display your banner.

Please get in touch with Jean or Hazel if you willing to act as a steward for a couple of hours during the exhibition.

If you have information about your banner please send an e-mail to Hazel. We will print it onto a card to display alongside your banner

If you have MU kneelers in your church we would like to display them at the exhibition. Please get in touch. More information in the June Newsletter.

Jean - jmw35n@gmail.com or
01353 658581

Hazel - hwill66@icloud.com or
01638 743897

The info is now live on the Cathedral website – link here

<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/mothers-union-banner-exhibition>



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of Ely



Breaking the Silence.

There are two events taking place at St Andrew's Church Soham, aimed at breaking the silence of the British Slave Trade. (You may remember this was due to take place last October but had to be postponed.)

On Wednesday 22 May at 7.30pm there will be a talk by Dr Inge Dornan, Brunel University. On Saturday 25 May at 7.30pm there will be a performance by Dr Holly Maples and Collisions Theatre

Company including testimony, story and song from the voices of 18th Century British Abolitionists, including Olaudah Equiano. Olaudah, a former slave from Nigeria, known for most of his life as Gustavus Vassa, was a writer and abolitionist. In 1792 he married Susannah Cullen, from Fordham, in St Andrew's Church and their two daughters were baptised there as well.

Entry to both events is free and there is no need to book (retiring collectio). <https://www.standrews-soham.org.uk/events>

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union

Charity no. 251394

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

Faith In Action – May '24

Thank You From "Refuge"

Jean Webb 01353 658581 jmw35n@gmail.com

I had the pleasure of meeting Carolyn, Service Manager of both Fenland and Mid-Cambes refuges when they she and Esther, the Women's Worker from Fenland spoke to Ely Cathedral branch meeting recently. Carolyn particularly asked that I would say how very grateful they are for all the support received from us in Mothers' Union, and she feels bad that she is not able to thank everyone individually. I assured her I would pass on her thanks. Thank you all.

Thank you also for all the knitters who contributed to the enormous pile of knitted goods I received at the Diocesan Meeting in March. It has all been sorted, labelled suitably, and much has been distributed. I currently have 5 bags containing 24 lap blankets ready to go to Hinchingsbrooke Dementia and Frailty unit, I know how well they will be received. The letter of thanks we received on behalf of a grateful patient shows how much pleasure these gifts of love bring to the patients. (See front page)

AFIA

This is from one of our most regular referrers and she was letting us know that she retires at the end of the month. Lovely to receive it, but we will miss her as she was so reliable.

I just want to thank your amazing service for all the holidays you have given to my families over the years. It has been a pleasure working with you.

Your charity has given so many families an opportunity to spend time together and have fun which they would not have been able to do without you. Thank you once again.

SPECIAL DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Mothers' Union Quiet Day at Yaxley Church on 21st May, 10am-2.30pm.

Paula Spalding, our Mothers' Union Chaplain will be leading it.

All welcome.

The theme is 'I BEG OF YOU BEAR WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE.' Ephesians 4:1-7

10-10.15	Opening prayers
10.15-10.50	Heritage
10.50-11.25	Ancestors
11.25-11.35	Refreshment break
11.35-12.10	Roots
12.10-12.45	Hope
12.45-1.30	Lunch break - bring a packed lunch
1.30-2.15	A personal journey
2.15-2.30	Closing prayers

There will be prayers stations and activities to use as a focus for prayer and reflection but please bring whatever might help you to pray and reflect - art or craft materials/projects, journal, books, etc.

Canterbury Provincial Gathering. The King's Centre, Oxford
Saturday 22nd June 2024
10am – 5.30pm
£20 per ticket

Detailed information was sent with the April Newsletter.

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Susan Baker Memorial Fund

A reminder that the Ely Diocese MU is able to give grants to branches and churches in the Diocese.

PURPOSE OF THE FUND

For supporting those who work with families, particularly in Areas of Deprivation or with identified need within the Ely Diocese.

Examples of ways in which we might support

Resources for groups i.e. Books, Audio Visuals, Art and craft materials
Christian themes – Advent calendars, Easter resources
Administration
Courses
Venue hire

For an application form please get in touch with Jean Webb jmw35n@gmail.com or 01353 658581

Former Mothers' Union Leaders Reunite for a Special Visit



L to R: Rosemary Kempzell, Lynne Tembey, Sheran Harper, Pat Harris, Trish Heywood-Brown, and Lady Christine Eames

Watch Sheran delivering Midday Prayers on 2nd May and on our Facebook page. And then, keep coming back every day to share in prayers and reflections with our members!



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Newsletter June 2024

MOTHERS' UNION GARDEN PARTY

Bishop's Garden, Ely. Friday 21st June. 3-5pm.

Music from the King's School will entertain us.

Bring your own packed tea. Fizz and soft drinks provided.

Raffle prizes will be gratefully received and there will also be an opportunity to buy MU cards and see a display about our worldwide links.

Everyone welcome

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Mary Summer Day Service
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in the Cathedral Presbytery

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BANNER NEWS

Those who have returned forms will receive individual letters later in June with more details about where and when to bring banners. Please consider whether you could be a steward on one of the fourteen days the exhibition is open. There will be a need for at least two people each session as one will need to man the MU card and badges stall.

Jean - jmw35n@gmail.com or 01353 658581

Hazel - hwill66@icloud.com or 01638 743897

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on Zoom
10.30am on 20th June – Maureen Haigh**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of Ely

Registered Charity No. 251394

In May, Mothers' Union members in Lusaka Zambia, took part in "Missions Week" by feeding the street children. A lot of preparation and big cooking pots involved, well done to all the members.



Congratulations to **Norma and Brian Scullion** who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on 9th May.

Jo Wibberley was speaking at their branch meeting last week when Norma was presented with a card and a gift.

A REFLECTION – June

Philip Baker

I am always searching out new angles from which to reflect on my confident belief in God, my Creator, and the other day I came across the following: “If the sea couldn’t stop Moses, If a wall couldn’t stop Joshua, If a giant couldn’t stop David, If death couldn’t stop Jesus, Then with God nothing can stop you”. I suggest you read those words again, pausing at each and considering the immensity of the act behind each phrase. And there are so many other examples we could draw on. I hope it strikes you as it did me – amazing beyond words.

It reminds me of a song I rather like: “What a friend we have in Jesus”, which draws on scripture in Exodus and John. How true that title phrase is. The song contains the following line: “We should never be discouraged - Take it to the Lord in prayer” which is a personal favourite, but the whole song is one of positivity, hope and praise. If you do not know the lyrics they are widely available on-line (or from me if you prefer). It reflects a message I learnt many years ago from a previous vicar here in Burwell, that provided what we are doing meets with the Will of God we need not be concerned, as everything we need will be supplied by Him. That proved to be the case then and I have applied the same principle many times since and found that, with discernment and prayer, it does indeed work out.

The point all this makes is that with God we can cope with whatever challenge faces us, be it one imposed on us or one which we have chosen to undertake ourselves. God really can do anything; all we have to do is ask Him for His help and submit to His Will. However, with God on our side, we have nothing to fear.

A photo of the hats, blankets and baby garments knitted by the Knitting Group of **Stapleford MU**.



Faith in Action

Jean Webb

Delivery of the lap blankets, twiddle muffs and cannula sleeves to Shirley Binu, Dementia Specialist Nurse, at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital at start of Dementia Awareness Week.



WEEKEND RETREAT TO HIGHGATE HOUSE

Share reflective time together, relax together, praise God together

Date: 4.00pm Friday 25th October 2024 – 4.00pm Sunday 27th October 2024

Price (fully inclusive of accommodation, food, tea/coffee): £251 per person (no single room supplement). £50 deposit

Details from philip.bakerhome@ntlworld.com or by phone from: 07758 221704.

Ely Diocesan M U Charity no. 251394

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com



July Newsletter 2024

GARDEN PARTY

The Bishop's Garden was a delightful place to be on the afternoon of 21st July with glorious weather and the opportunity to meet old friends and new. Entertainment was provided by the King's School whose group 'Spikes Cello Ensemble' played some wonderful music. Members enjoyed a varied selection of compositions and Della and Ken Fletcher were particularly proud as their grandson was one of the cellists. Although not intended as a fundraiser, generous donations and buying of raffle tickets raised £200 for work within the diocese.



There will be an August edition of the newsletter so please send any pictures or news you have about your area before the end of July.



Ely Cathedral Branch

This photo was taken at Moira Soutter's Memorial Tea on Monday 17th June in the Lady Chapel. Moira was a committee member and keen supporter of Ely Cathedral Branch for many years and especially the Edward Bear Group. She was much loved by the Edward Bear families and always delighted by the new born babies, for whom she knitted hats and booties. She will be sorely missed.

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am on
18th July – Linda Swain**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053



St. Neots Branch

On Wednesday, 5th June we held our annual Garden Party in the garden of one of our members, Jean, who has nobly hosted this event for several years. It was very well attended, we were blessed with fine weather, members and friends enjoyed a lavish spread and we raised the amazing total of just over £300 for AFIA and £136 from the raffle for other MU funds. A thoroughly enjoyable and successful occasion.

Liz Elson

Congratulations to Mary Buxton of **Grantchester** who will be 100 on 15th July. Mary came to branch meetings with her carer regularly until 2020. She is now housebound but still enjoys reading the monthly newsletter.



ELY CATHEDRAL RESIDENT AND PARISH PASSES

With the upcoming MU Banner Exhibition in the Lady Chapel in August, it will be useful if members were able to gain free entry to the Cathedral to visit the Exhibition, and at other times.

Resident Passes. If you live in the CB6 or CB7 postal area you are entitled to free entry to Ely Cathedral. **Parish Pass Holders.** Ely Cathedral offers free entry for those on the electoral roll of churches in the Diocese of Ely.

Here is the link on the Diocesan website for information
<https://www.elydiocese.org/ely-cathedral-parish-and-resident-passes-6066.php>

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Mary Sumner Day Service
on Friday 9th August at 11.30am
in the Cathedral Presbytery

CONTACT:
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www.elycathedral.org
Further information from:
MUelyDiocese@hotmail.com



Banner News

With this newsletter you will also receive an information sheet for those who are responsible for delivering your banner to the cathedral and collecting afterwards.

If this is not the person who receives the newsletter to distribute, please make sure that the person who is responsible is sent or given the information.

If you have information about your banner please send it to Hazel as soon as possible.

We are still happy to have names of those who would like to do a two-hour stewarding slot (or more).

Jean - jmw35n@gmail.com or 01353 658581 or

Hazel - hwill66@icloud.com or 01638 743897



Registered Charity No. 251394

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of Ely



This presentation was to Freda Smith for 72 years of membership of the Mothers Union. Freda has been a member of **the Brampton Branch** of the Mothers Union for most of these 72 years. The presentation was made at their annual garden party (which was held inside due to the cold and wet weather). There were 46 people there including 3 children and everyone enjoyed sausage rolls, cheese scones, fairy cakes and scones with jam and cream together with cups of tea. Donations were given towards the Away From It All holiday fund and £241 was raised.

A Reflection

Philip Baker

If you were asked to nominate the most significant, or important, verse in the Bible, my guess is that John 15:16 would be in contention: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” The next verse states “This is my command: Love each other.” Taken together, these two verses set out everything we need, even alone, each gives a vital guide and reminder to us of our ultimate purpose.

Some of us take this absolutely to heart, give ourselves to God’s purpose and become priests. Others, the majority, take the words to heart and try to live them out in our daily lives, using the skills and talents God has given us for that purpose. Such is the boundless Grace of God. One of the tasks that those of us forming the majority have, is to ensure that our priests receive our love and support in the measure with which they give it to us. We are all chosen by God – an amazing thought in itself – and He has a purpose set out for each of us. In the same way that Paul (and all the preachers of the early church) needed support from each other, the love of his fellow Christians, so today do those who take steps to “go and bear fruit” need the love and support of their fellow Christians.

In this increasingly secular and self-centred world we live in, speaking of rules which are hard to follow and of a God who knows us and what we do, is not always popular and requires great courage and effort. Let us always remember the words of Jesus reported by John and think of what they mean. Surely they tell us that we are God’s chosen subjects; that He has a purpose for each of us – to spread His Word throughout all peoples; to always act with love, compassion and never count the cost. Those who have become priests are special and singled out to give freely of God’s Word and love as His representatives on Earth. The rest of us have a duty to reflect those blessings as they fall to us, always remembering that we are all special in the eyes of our Lord.

Worldwide President's Tour of Oceania Comes To An End

The Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, has now successfully completed the five-week tour of Oceania countries, marking the final leg of her leadership journey before her term concludes in December 2024. This tour was a significant event, celebrating the global unity and shared mission of empowering women and supporting families. The journey was not just a symbolic farewell but a heartfelt exploration of the vibrant communities within Mothers' Union across the region, from Australia to New Zealand through to the Solomons Islands, each country offered unique insights and moments of shared joy and solidarity.

Now safely back in her home country of Guyana, the Worldwide President cherishes the memories and friendships formed during this journey. Reflecting on the trip, she expressed gratitude for the hospitality shown and the opportunity to witness the dedication of Mothers' Union members in Oceania, Zone C.



Picture capturing the essence of Sheran’s memorable journey, showcasing moments of joy, fellowship, and the shared mission of Mothers' Union worldwide.

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS. Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

MAY THURSDAY PRAYER led by Gail Swanson on “Service with Love”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX4uQMltGZk>

JUNE THURSDAY PRAYER led by Maureen Haigh on “Trusting in Christ”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kV7VP8CWhzs>

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Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2024

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union Banner Exhibition

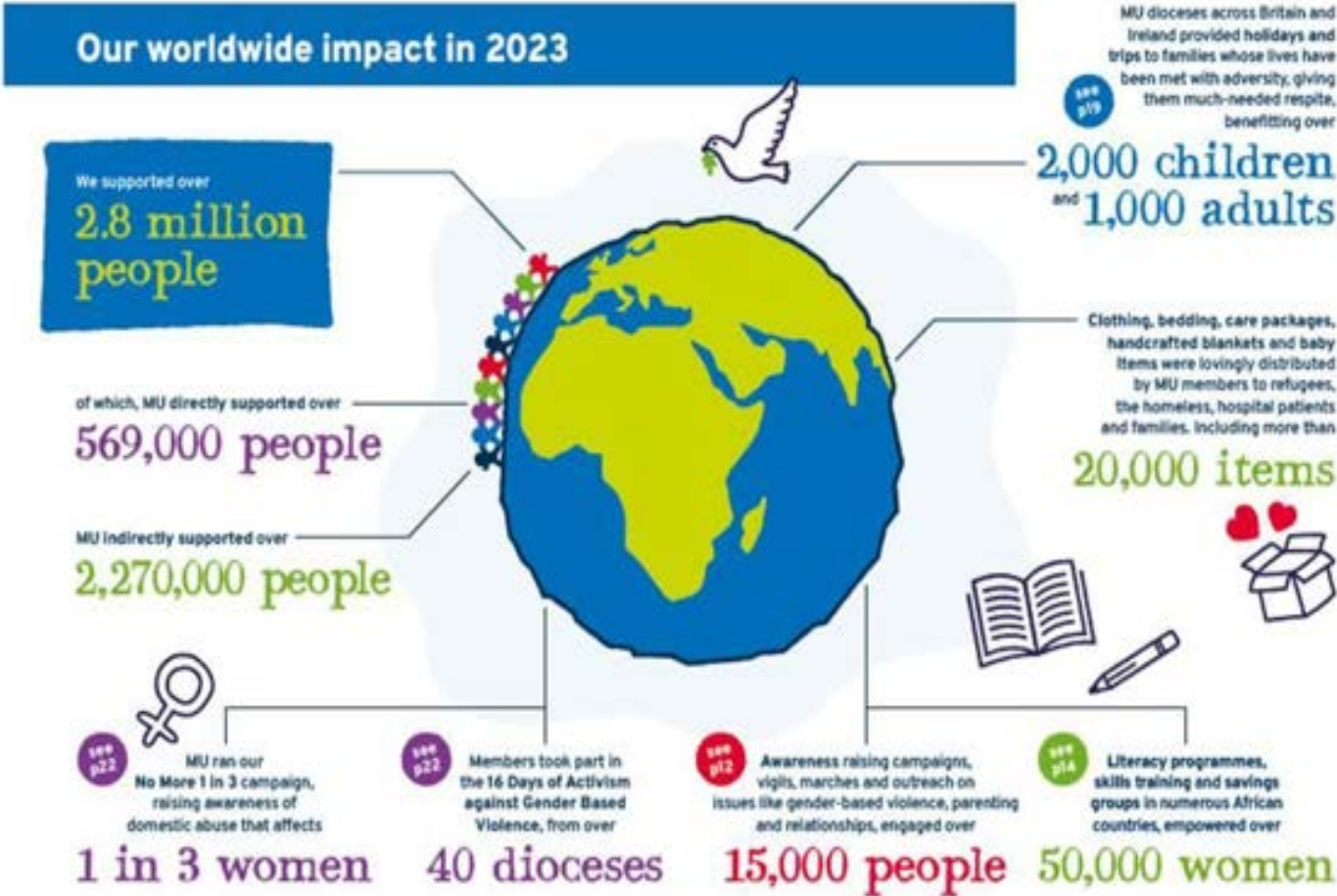
In preparation for the Banner Exhibition the Diocesan Banner needed to be removed from its glass case which is placed in a corner at the back of the north transept. I looked at it more carefully than I have in the past and was able to take some photographs of the detail of the banner. It was designed by Margo Bulman and embroidered in 1959 at St. Margaret's Convent, East Grinstead who were well known for their ecclesiastical embroidery. There are detailed notes on the design including the arms showing the Diocesan Three Crowns and the arms of the Mothers' Union, the escutcheon of the City of Westminster and uniquely for a lay organisation, a medallion of the Mother and Child.



Banner Exhibition
Ely Cathedral Lady Chapel
1st -14th August
10am-2pm weekdays
12noon -3pm Sundays

Mary Sumner Day Service
Fri. 9th August 11.30am





The chart above is from our 2023 MU annual report published in July 2024. It is on the Mothers' Union website and contains a wealth of information.



RE: Mothers' Union Summer of Hope

A flower festival with the theme 'Inspired by ' was held in July at St. John the Baptist Church, Somersham. Our miniMUm group (MU) entered a display entitled 'Inspired by Grace' featuring Grace's photograph and information about the MU Summer of Hope. £100 was collected for MU Summer of Hope.

BRAMPTON VISIT TO ST. NEOTS MU



Nowadays it is becoming increasingly challenging for branch members to get together for the traditional deanery events, but planning a joint event for two neighbouring branches could be more practical, especially for a social occasion held in the summer months.

Brampton and St Neots have recently held such an event and it turned out to be very successful. It consisted of an evening walk in Riverside Park followed by an informal tour of St Neots Parish Church and refreshments provided by the host branch. Those unable to walk were able to come later and join the church tour.

Despite the dampness of the weather the short evening walk was enjoyed by a valiant few, four from each branch plus one primary school leaver and one labrador. They were all ready for a drink, snack and homemade cake by the time they reached the church!

The tour that followed was led by a member of the Parish Church congregation who was willing to come and share his extensive knowledge of the beautiful old church and its many interesting and significant features, while the group walked slowly round with him. The evening was greatly enjoyed by all and provided an excellent opportunity for us to get to know each other better.

So we would thoroughly recommend that other branches hold a similar event as it is easy to organise, and most of us are blessed in being able to worship regularly in lovely old parish churches. In this diocese we also have many areas of open countryside as well as a park on our doorstep where there are suitable, attractive walks. Come to think of it, we shouldn't be at all surprised to learn that some other branches have already benefitted from this kind of outing!

Julie Barker and Liz Elson

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **JULY THURSDAY PRAYER**:

“Going Forward in God’s Plan”. Led by Linda Swain.

(Apologies for the quality of the recording this month, due to a new camera being used in the Cathedral. Also we have no Powerpoint as Sue, who usually runs our Zoom meetings, was away on holiday, and due to technical issues could not include it.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrH5qkx93gl>



Celebrations in Lusaka, Zambia, as new members were enrolled at a service in the Cathedral. They do look happy.

The following was one of the notices in the Cathedral service sheet recently. Matthew and Mike and Jessica are all MU members

The Rev'd Canon Dr Jessica Martin, the Rev'd Canon Matthew Bradbury and the Rev'd Mike Banyard, Priest Vicar, are celebrating 20 years of priestly ministry. Ordained priests by the Rt Rev'd Dr Anthony Russell at the Petertide ordinations in 2004, all three have ministered in Ely Diocese since then. The last two are now retired, and Jessica is moving to Chelmsford Cathedral as Dean soon. Jessica is presiding this morning and Mike is the deacon.

Triennial theme 2025-2027

We are pleased to share that the triennial theme for 2025-2027, following on from "Transformation Now!", approved by the Worldwide Board in July, is:

JOIN US and JOIN IN!
MU is changing lives.

This triennial theme builds on Transformation Now! which looks at how MU can continue to be relevant and reflect the needs of churches and communities in the 21st century. The clear message is that MU is evolving, and MU needs to grow if we are going to continue as a movement of members delivering change in communities across the globe. This theme asks us to proactively share about MU and encourage anyone who supports what we do, to join us and join in. It also asks existing members to take a look at what they feel able to do in their churches and communities, and to join in.

You will receive further information on how to use this theme. Hopefully, by telling you now, you can integrate this theme into your programme planning for 2025.

A REFLECTION – August

Philip Baker (23rd July 2024)

A recent Sunday sermon concerned God's amazing Grace – how, through the death of His Son, Jesus, on the Cross, we are all eligible for eternal life with Him. I thank God every day that I believe in this incredible gift, given freely to us, and that God knows me by name and is expecting me at some time in the future.

But I could not help but contrast this generous gift, this joy, with the state of the world today; how some people can reject all that is on offer to satisfy some personal need to do things which are so totally at odds with the nature of our loving God. There is hatred for those who do not share our thoughts, intolerance for anyone not conforming to our view. There is oppression by totalitarian regimes, a "leader takes all" mentality. Everywhere there is violence by the strong over the weak. Thoughts which culminated in the moment that someone attempted to assassinate Donald Trump – not a nice man (in my view) but not deserving of murder. Even within our mother church there is an inability to find a will to meet and compromise in other views, such that no Bishop could be appointed to Ely. Where in all this is evidence that the words of Jesus in John's account chapter 13:34 - "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."?

This disparity between the ideals of love and tolerance versus the actions we see seem too great for us to overcome. But if we all, individually, reject these views then collectively we can make a difference. The big issues will take time, but we can straightaway make adjustments to our own lives as a start. We can forgive that driver who is discourteous instead of feeling annoyed by him (or her). In our daily lives we can ignore those who seek to provoke disharmony – like all such people they will soon give up if their efforts meet with no response. We can work to recognise that people are truly diverse in every conceivable way – God made us that way – and that everyone has a God-given right to be what they are and not be a copy of what we are.

Best of all, we can hold an image in our minds of how Jesus would have responded in any given situation and follow the command He gave us – "As I have loved you, so you must love one another".

PS – your homework this month is to read the prayer ascribed to St Francis. Speak to me if you cannot find a copy.

Joan White, a long-time member of Burwell Mother's Union passed away on 10th July at the age of 98. She was always busy and provided a sponge cake for every MU meeting as well as bringing bags containing knitted baby clothes and blankets. She passed her driving test at 52, late in life learnt how to swim and line dance and avidly supported the Cambridge organisations in helping the fellow hard of hearing. In recent years she mastered Zoom so that she could attend our on-line church services. Sometimes it was just the top of her head, but she was there! Joan was a real gentlewoman – and brought a smile to everyone she met, always calm, willing and friendly.

Janet Duffy, branch leader of Woodston for many years, passed away on July 8th aged 80. Her funeral will take place on Thursday 15th August.

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on
Zoom 10.30am**

15th August – Irene Porter

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VWhXUGINWkpaeGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

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St Mary's Ely Branch – Afternoon Tea Party.

St Mary's Ely Branch held a very enjoyable Afternoon Tea Party in July which raised £265 for the Summer of Hope Appeal. We were pleased to welcome members and guests from other branches in the Deanery and surrounding villages. Many thanks to all those came along and supported the event, and to St Mary's MU members for providing refreshments.



The **Ely Cathedral MU Branch** held a Coffee Morning with a selection of stalls on Saturday July 6th. Despite the fact that it was a very wet morning which affected the number of people who came, an amount of just over £400 was raised for the Summer of Hope Appeal. Thank you for everyone's hard work and generosity.



Balsham Branch Lunch

Balsham Branch, which now has only ten paid up members' held their annual garden meeting at the home of Judy and Peter Neale. 7 of us turned up and we were able to be in the garden. Peter had organised a quiz about Balsham which was quite difficult! None of us got all the answers.

This was followed by a good tea with lots of chat.

National Vice President of Mothers' Union, Mrs. Wilhelmina Graves, Visits UK to Promote Membership Among Ghanaian Community



In a recent visit to the United Kingdom, Mrs. Wilhelmina Graves, Diocesan President for the Diocese of Accra in the Province of Ghana, engaged with key stakeholders from the Ghanaian community in Britain to promote the organisation's mission and membership among the community. She shared that Ghanaians in the UK should be proud of the significant contributions MU is making in Ghana, and by supporting the movement, they could help further these efforts.



September Newsletter 2024

MU Banner Exhibition



Many thanks to all who were able to come to Ely Cathedral for the Banner Exhibition in August. We had lots of wonderful comments from members as well as those who were enjoying a visit to the Cathedral.



One of the banners I now know includes leather in its design bought from a shop that sold bikers jackets. Just what was needed!

A group of four French young men came to make a special visit the Lady Chapel. They had been at school together and now each year spent a holiday visiting a place where they could sing. It was wonderful choral singing which lasted about an hour. A delightful afternoon to be stewarding the exhibition.



One lady stopped to speak to us and I commented on her necklace which was the silver Way of Life design taken from the modern sculpture designed to mark the new millennium. She was very privileged to now be the owner of the model that Jonathan Clarke designed which led to him receiving the commission. He presented it to her as a gift.

The service on Mary Sumner Day was very special with 100 members attending, visiting the exhibition and having tea and biscuits afterwards. Thanks go to the Cathedral Branch for providing them and enabling members to meet together. It was lovely to meet members of Southwark who travelled to Ely to see the exhibition and join the service.



if anyone would like a copy of the service sheet for Mary Sumner Day Service please get in contact with Debbie Tye (01353 666883) and she will either email it to you or send a hard copy.

**The Autumn Diocesan meeting will be held at St. Johns Church, Waterbeach on
Wednesday 23rd October 2024 9.30am – 2pm
All are welcome.**

Diocesan Members' Lunch.

Debbie Tye, Diocesan Members' Officer.

Just to remind Diocesan Members that the Annual Lunch will be taking place on Tuesday 5 November, 12.30pm, at Ely City Golf Club. There will be a talk from the Venerable Hugh McCurdy. Full details and further info will be circulated later in the month. Looking forward to seeing everyone at this event again.

Faith in Action

Jean Webb

I'm writing this, sitting beside a caravan, in a lovely setting, listening to bird song, watching an occasional red kite fly over. Do peaceful. It is the sort of relaxing experience we know is of benefit, and why we so wholeheartedly support our Afia "Away from. It All" holiday scheme for families. Today I received this

"I would just like to say so much thanks to the Mothers' Union for our trip away. We had the most amazing time. We have never stayed anywhere like that before. The children loved it and we were able to swim in the outdoor pool every day, as the weather was great.

The whole experience was wonderful. Thank you so much again"

After the busyness of the Banner Exhibition it has been good to relax. I want to thank everyone who supported, visited, commented etc. We couldn't have done it without your support. From the Feedback we've had, people who visited know a lot more about us now. I have even had an Afia enquiry from a visitor who saw the display.

Sadly, one item, a book of photos and text belonging to Shingay Deanery, seems to have gone astray. Did anyone collect it with their items in error? Please look if you have " a bag of bits" still waiting to be sorted. I believe it would be A4 size. Thank you.

Collections/deliveries to Refuges, hostels, hospitals etc have continued, and thank you for all the items made, collected and passed on.

St Ives Branch held three days of Afternoon Teas in the garden of Deirdre Milner on the 6th, 7th and 8th of August.

Funds were raised for AFIA and Summer of Hope. Although the weather was not always sunny, it was very pleasant to enjoy the tea, cakes and company. The total raised, including the sale of some homemade jam and donations, was £924.00.





In August, Lusaka Mothers' Union held their national conference. You will see Romans 12 1-8 on the banner, a very encouraging reading for Mothers' Union. The conference was very well attended, with many speakers. Visit the Anglican Diocese of Lusaka Mothers' Union Facebook page to hear some of these and view the colourful outfits worn by those attending. A sports Day was also included as you can see in one of the photos.





Request for storage

We have a number of banners, in perfect condition, made to show the previous sections of Ely Mothers' Union (Action and Outreach, Social Concern etc.). We would like to keep these for display in the future but need dry storage for them. **Each plastic container is approx. 1mtr (39") x 46cm (18") and there are two containers.** Can anyone offer safe storage for them? Please get in touch with Hazel.

A REFLECTION – September

Philip Baker (20th August 2024)

The House Group I attend has been working through the Gospel of Mark and, at our last session, we reached the section including the story of the blind beggar, Bartimaeus. You may recall that Jesus asked Bartimaeus "What do you want me to do for you" (Mark 10:51). Bartimaeus replied "Rabbi, I want to see" and Jesus restored his sight with the words "Go, your faith has healed you." (Mark 10:52). We were then asked to consider privately what we, as individuals, would ask God to do for us. How many times have you stood back and asked yourself that question? I cannot recall a single time that I have. Oh, I have asked God for a lot of things over the years but always in the moment, I have never stood back and viewed myself in the third party, as it were. However, I knew with instant clarity what it would be, something I have never considered but realised I have always needed (no, I am not going to share it!). It was a very powerful moment – read the story in Mark and then, while your mind is "in the zone" ask yourself that question – see what happens.

If the response proves elusive or even "nothing" then here is a thought to get you going. Every day in Compline as part of my daily prayer plan, I say the prayer of penitence that asks for God to forgive our sins and we confess "before the whole company of heaven and one another, that we have sinned in thought, word and deed and in what we have failed to do." We are usually aware of what we do that is wrong, but how often do we consider those things which we failed to do? Perhaps we could let our minds dwell on that thought for a while and ask God to help us to realise how we sin through carelessness. And this is why it is important: if we do not know the extent of our sin, we cannot acknowledge it and therefore confess it. We ask God (there you are, the link to the story of Bartimaeus) to forgive the sins which we have confessed. I leave you to fill in the blanks!

Dear Joanna,

It is with great sadness to let you know that my wife, Matilda (Tilda) passed away on 6th June after failing health which ended with her being on palliative care at home for the last three months of her life. She enjoyed receiving your letters which laterally I would have to read them to her because her eyesight failed to the point that she was registered blind. Many thanks for your faithful ministry to the Indoor membership of the Mothers Union in the Ely Diocese.

Every Blessing

Allan

(Received from Canon Allan Viller, Narborough)

Muriel Irene Missin

Born 12/04/1939 - died 25/07/2024

Her son Nicholas spoke at her funeral at S.S. Peter and Paul Church Wisbech and said the loves of her life had been church, music and children.

She met her husband at St. Mary's Church in Nottingham where he was the organist. They were blessed with the arrival of two sons Nicholas and William. Muriel became a primary school teacher and she became a member of Mothers Union in 1968 in Newcastle.

Muriel had a positive and humorous nature and moved to Wisbech in 2007 but in 2018 she had to make a life or death decision and decided to have a leg amputation at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge, but her positivity still shone through.

She became quite independent as the years moved on, with using an electric wheelchair and motorised scooter. Her grandchildren would call her gangster granny! The humour was evident when going along a street in Wisbech one day when a female approached her and said; "Have you got any spare change?" to which Muriel replied; "Have you got a spare leg!"

Farewell Muriel and thank you for your long-term support of Mothers' Union

Wendy Smith -Branch Leader.

Wisbech and North Nene Branch

Joanna Sanders still keeps in touch with a MU lady in Malawi and thought you might like to see her photos. I think the MU is very strong in Africa in the Commonwealth. Mama Agnes is a lovely lady and many years ago she stayed with us.

Hello my dear Gogo Joanna,

How are you over there?

It has been a long time since I heard from you.

Thank you very much for all your prayers. Glad to hear about the exhibition of M.U. Banners at the Ely Cathedral.

Sorry to hear about the decline in the Mothers Union. While here in Malawi MW the membership is growing and young women are joining the M.U., two of my daughter in-laws have joined the M.U. too.

From 8th -11th August 2024, we had a Mothers Union gathering too where members from all the four Dioceses in Malawi MW gathered together to celebrate the Mary Sumner day, had many activities like prayers, marching, hospital visitation, door to door evangelism and helping the needy, teaching on the M.U. objects and many more.

Unfortunately, I was unable to go and attend as I was down with High Blood pressure and Flue.

I have also tried to contact Canon Agnes but no response.

Glad to hear you will be sending 6 Diaries and the MU. and the M.U. Calendars through Charlotte, may the Lord bless you 🙏🙏❤️ abundantly, Charlotte will send them to me.

I just pray that one day we shall meet again there in the U.K., but Charlotte says Airfares are expensive these days. But our God is full of miracles, one day He will make it happen and it will be nice to see you again.



Congratulations to Barbara and Mick Hoy who celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary on July 4th. Barbara was a Branch Leader of the **Somersham MU** for many years as well as a deanery Vice-president and MU Trustee.

Thursday Prayer

We may be unable to Zoom Thursday Prayer for September as the quality of the screen shot and the sound is too poor using the new, smaller camera used by the Cathedral. We are looking to buy a new camera owned by the Mothers' Union. This means that **the information for the next Thursday Prayer will be distributed separately before 19th September**. The Choice of members to view using Zoom instead of travelling to the Cathedral is valued by a number of those who do not live close to Ely. As we start to move into the winter months it becomes even more valuable.

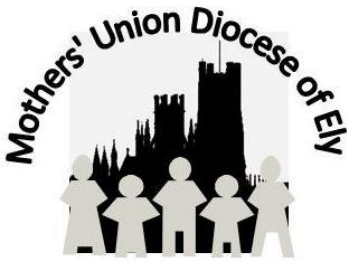
Every branch leader receives a copy of the service and I hope distributes this to members but reading it does not replace worshipping together and hearing the short talk given by a different member each month. Please note the dates in your diary and spend 30 mins. at 10.30am either in person at the cathedral or by zoom.

Those of you who would like to take part could receive a separate individual invitation each month, as well as having information in the newsletter. Please let Hazel know if you are interested.

Many of you will remember the marathon bike ride that Jo Wibberley undertook in 2015 visiting all the branches of the Ely Diocese. She has just finished a book with stories and pictures of this wonderful feat.

If you would like to buy a copy please get in touch with Jo (jowibs.mu@gmail.com).

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October Newsletter 2024



Election Results for Triennium 2025-2027

Congratulations to Kathleen Snow on the announcement of her election as the new President of the Worldwide Mother's Union. Kathleen, from Canada, has served on the Board for six years as the Zonal Trustee for the Americas and has been a volunteer facilitator for the worldwide parenting programme and the (MULOA) consultation, which engaged 200,000 members globally. She is also the Chair of the MU Development Committee, overseeing programmes like the transformational literacy initiative that empowers women and breaks the cycle of poverty.

Accepting the role, Kathleen commented "This is humbling, and a great honour. I look forward to working with members and staff to continue to build God's Kingdom through Mothers' Union. I am particularly excited that, as we carry forward the torch in January, we will be building on the firm foundations of our transformational programme work. We are about to start a new campaign, speaking up to right the injustice which means that, still today, 765 million adults cannot read or write, 2/3rds of them women, meaning they are unable to read medicine bottles, register the birth of a child, vote or ensure they get the correct change in the market. Sheran Harper (seen above with Bev Jullien), has been president for six years and will hand over to Kathleen in 2025.

The new Provincial President for the Canterbury Province is Comfort Fearon, currently president of Southwark and Julia Jamieson will continue for three more years as our Zonal Trustee.

**The Autumn Diocesan meeting will be held at St. Johns Church, Waterbeach
Wednesday 23rd October 2024 9.30am – 2pm**

**Speaker is Diana Minns – co-ordinator of the Women's Homelessness Action Group a
working group of It Takes a City who advocate for a new approach to women's
homelessness**

**Donations of basic toiletries would be very welcome to donate to the charity
Tea/coffee supplied Please bring a packed lunch All are welcome**



Led by Revd Paula Spalding, our MU Diocesan Chaplain on the theme: "Shalom: Wellbeing".

A small number of us gathered at the lovely parish church in the peaceful village of Reach, an ideal place for a Quiet Day. Paula based her five sessions during the day around the book by Ruth Rice: The A-Z of Wellbeing. Each session started with Bible verses, a short meditation and a period of silence. We could stay in the church, stroll or sit in the garden, or walk round the village, and we enjoyed fellowship over lunch.

The five sessions were: Connect; Learn; Get Active; Take Notice; and Give.

We CONNECT through good relationships with God and others, remembering God is Love. We look at nature and the world around us and feel the spiritual energy of church gardens.

We LEARN through God's word in the Bible and from other people. We breathe in God's word – he supports us and never leaves us.

We GET ACTIVE, which is good for the body and mind, and our faith translates into works we do in our lives and for others. God's protection and compassion is there for us, he loves and cares for us, and we can share this.

We TAKE NOTICE by stopping and being in the present moment, and trying not to worry about the past or the present. We are "God's Masterpiece", with new lives created through Jesus – made on purpose for a purpose. We can make time for our interests which give us life.

We GIVE in many ways to the church, of our time, and to others. Such acts which are beneficial to those who receive, also create a positive feeling within us, and lead to thankful hearts. Yadah! – the Jewish word for Praise! We give ourselves to God and we can find him in the secular and sacred, in the busyness and quietness.

We find SHALOM – a deep peace from God – to speak it, share it and live it!

We meditated on Psalm 23: The Lord is MY Shepherd.

We sang: Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here;
Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear.

In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground;
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

If you've never been to a Quiet Day, they are great opportunities to stop and pause in our daily lives to connect with God. We may all have taken away something different from this day, but these are the things that spoke to me during this time.

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **SEPTEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER**:

“Nurturing Faith”. Led by Ros Wright.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yrdq0dJaDnc>

The Diocesan Members’ Lunch is on Tuesday 5 November, 12.30pm, at Ely City Golf Club.

There will be a talk from the Venerable Hugh McCurdy about his visit to Rwanda.

Tickets will cost £25. Hot 2-course meal, with dessert, and tea/coffee.

Debbie Tye (dmtypost@hotmail.com)

If you would like to join us and meet some of our diocesan members please get in touch with Debbie.

CONNECTED

Everyone should have received their Connected Magazine by now. If not please let your branch leader know so that she can ask Ros for a copy. It contains a wealth of information about the Mothers’ Union as well as an A5 sized poster to promote the new campaign “**Empower her Literacy**”. If you have a public place to display it, please do so. It would be a small token from members to support this important message. There is also more evidence about the campaign in Connected and some information on the front page of this newsletter. If you look on-line there is also a short video.

There are also photographs of all the Christmas cards. Why not get together in your branch to order cards, diaries or calendars and have them shipped directly to one local member for distribution. Hazel has many of the cards if individuals want to get in touch and will have some at Diocesan day. Always remember to mark our diocese of Ely in the appropriate place when ordering as we receive a small percentage in the form of a grant to be spent in our diocese.

Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am

17th October

Presented by Sue Claydon.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode: 080127

A REFLECTION – October

Philip Baker

I am going to start this month with what may surprise some, something that might be seen variously as a claim or a confession, but almost certainly unexpected. As I entered my twenties in the mid-sixties, I had a

grounding in both classical and rock music, and I have recently found the joy of contemporary worship music. Whilst I have reservations about some of the communities giving rise to this style of praise, there is much to find in the music itself.

One of the songs I find uplifting is called simply "Praise", written and performed by Elevation Worship (who also wrote "The Blessing", adapted by the Church of England so effectively). It contains the line: "As long as I'm breathing, I've got a reason to praise the Lord". Could there be a simpler summary of our belief? I am not suggesting that everyone should seek to enjoy this style of worship song, but I do suggest that we should think about how we express our faith and love for God, and be prepared to try whatever is available.

Psalm 96 is one of many to exhort us to greater expression of praise of the Lord. It is too long to quote here, but read it yourselves – It starts "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise His name;". Emphasising this, Psalm 100 starts "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs." It seems to me that we are intended to celebrate our Lord God with simple joy and happiness, glad to be one of His own regardless of our circumstances in this life.

From the standpoint of someone looking at Christianity for the first time, much of what we do can appear impenetrable! Being direct and expressing our faith simply is surely good. When I was young, I could follow the whole service in Latin – but did not understand any of it! The earliest Christians had to make huge changes to what they did and how they perceived their faith. In a living faith we too have to continue that change as society around us changes. We can do it!

Quiet Days – Rosey Feuell

If your branch would like to run a quiet day (or half day) Rosey Feuell would be happy to help. Please see below.

I am writing to let you know that I am someone who is willing and well qualified to lead Quiet Days or similar for Mothers' Union groups locally. I am now an LLM at Gt Shelford St Mary, an experienced spiritual director and well known to the Sawston Mothers' Union group under Janet Martin.

Rosey Feuell

roseyleaf@talktalk.net

Sally Rowlands

It is with sadness we inform you of the death of Sally Rowlands, a member of the Ely Cathedral Branch. She frequently used her lovely garden for the summer garden party of the branch which raised substantial funds for the Mother's Union. Last year she was presented with a long service certificate by Hazel for her many years in support of the Mothers' Union. Her funeral is in Ely Cathedral on Tuesday 8th October.

Anne Gilbert

Anne Gilbert, a member of Burwell branch, passed away recently after a short illness. Always kind and with a wide smile, she will be much missed for her calm and friendly approach to everyone.

Ruth Chilvers who passed away on 23rd August 2024

Ruth was one of the founder members of the March Deanery Evening branch that started in the mid nineteen nineties, for members who could not attend afternoon meetings due to work commitments.

For many years, Ruth welcomed us into her home and hosted our monthly meetings. During this time, she held the position of Branch leader, who, with the help of Mike, kept us well informed of events being held within the Diocese and details of meetings via email and telephone. Mike certainly honed his secretarial skills in taking note of countless telephone messages and information to pass on to us all!

During the pandemic many of us looked forward to, and welcomed, Ruth's phone calls for a chat. As she said, it was just to 'keep in touch', and to ask 'how are you and all the family?' Family was everything to Ruth and she loved sharing family news. Even when we visited her in hospital, a week before her death, she wanted to know how our children and their families were, many of which she had taught as a early years teacher.

Ruth was especially supportive of the Ely Diocese Mothers Union fund raising causes. She gave support to the Worldwide fund, the Fenland Women's Refuge and Ely Diocese AFIA fund which provides a caravan holiday at Hunstanton for families in need of some respite and quality time together. It is so fitting that Mike and the family have chosen AFIA for one of the donations in Ruth's memory.

At the beginning of year, Ruth celebrated her milestone 80th birthday. Ruth invited all the MU members to join her in a lovely afternoon tea at Skylark. A most enjoyable memorable afternoon was spent together with Ruth, a memory which we all look back on fondly.

As a branch, we give our thanks for Ruth's commitment and dedication to the aims and objectives of the Mothers Union, and her support to families especially those less fortunate. Ruth has left us treasured memories of being a special person who has inspired and enriched our lives through her devotion, her friendship and love.

Margaret High

The Revd Carol Avery BEM - RIP



Rev Carol Avery BEM, died on 10th September. She was an extraordinary Pioneer Priest, alongside her incumbent husband Andrew, in Stanground, Farcet and Fletton. Carol spoke at one of our Diocesan meetings about her ministry and the formation of the charity 'Mary's Child', which had a transforming effect on many people, especially those who were distressed and desperate.

Due to her close involvement with communities in Peterborough, the funeral will take place in Peterborough Cathedral, led by Rt Rev Dr Dagmar Winter, Acting Bishop of Ely, on Tuesday 8th October at 1pm.

Donations may be made to [Mary's Child – Loving, caring and supporting families \(maryschild.org.uk\)](https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/) and can be given online [here](#).

Picture shows Carol with Esther a support worker at Mary's Child.

Ely Diocesan M U Charity no. 251394 <https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

WHITWORTH TRUST

Report from Jo Wibberley

"Last Monday there was a most successful Garden Party held in the garden at Whitworth House. The previous week three trustees had spent an afternoon tidying the garden and we hope a volunteer gardener

will come forward to keep it in trim and support the young women who are keen to plant flowers. The trustees had provided a gazebo and extra chairs but the House supported the trustees in the provision of cakes and drinks.

The garden party was by invitation only and it was good to meet the support workers, two of the young residents, former trustees and representatives of other agencies including Kristian Hewett, the newly appointed chaplain to CCHP (Cambridge Churches Homeless Project) and Diana from WHAG (Women's Homeless Action Group). Diana has offered to speak about WHAG to the MU so I could pass this on to Stapleford, Sawston & Linton branches or perhaps a diocesan day?

Those who wished could go inside the house and we were shown one of the rooms for a resident which was currently empty and the kitchen/diner/common room. It was particularly interesting to speak with the support workers and young residents who are so appreciative of the support that the Trust and the MU give. The 4 bedding packs supplied by the Trust recently have all been put to use already. As well as the welcome bags, they are in need of a constant supply of essentials – soap, toothpaste, shower gel, sanitary products.

The support workers spoke of the activities they plan for the residents: crafts, cooking, a hot chocolate evening etc. Many are at college and it was rewarding to hear how the computer recently given to a resident has been so much valued and appreciated in supporting her in her studies. In the vacation they were able to go to a nearby activity centre and they all spoke so positively about the interests and enthusiasm of the residents, though not hiding some of the difficulties encountered when they first arrive and have to work through. Some residents were volunteering at the Shepreth Wildlife park and particularly the hedgehog rescue centre which gave them a sense of motivation that something was relying on them.”

AFIA

Jean Webb

10 families have been away this year, and so far one is booked for half term. We also received a request for details from a worker in Cambridge, who had seen the display at the Banner Exhibition.

Di Sabel will be finishing as our “bookings officer” at the end of this triennium, and our thanks go to her for all her work. I am pleased that Ros Wright has agreed to take this position on next year.

WORLDWIDE NEWS

In August, 13 Deacons and 14 Pastors were ordained in the Kigali Diocese in Rwanda. Mothers' Union members took part in the service parade.



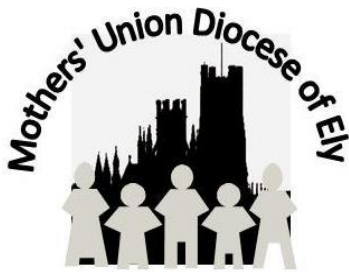
RISE UP AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE

To achieve the Bronze award your branch or church should:

- 1. Put a RISE UP poster raising awareness about domestic abuse in an appropriate public place such as in churches, toilets, community centres, village halls etc.**
- 2. Commit to pray for those affected by domestic abuse, including the victims, survivors, perpetrators, and those who work in the field of domestic abuse.**
- 3. Make a connection with your local domestic abuse support organisation to see how you can support them. You could offer moving in and moving on packages.**

Get in touch with Hazel if you can achieve all of the above.

More information on the MU website.



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2024



A photograph of the twenty people who attended the MU week-end retreat at High Gate in Northamptonshire recently. There will be more about our time there in the December newsletter



Yaxley branch members had fun together making CHRISTMAS TREES, using ribbons, as gifts for the women's refuges. Each tree came with a Christian Christmas message and a Mothers' Union sticker.

16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence

Saturday 30th November at Ely Cathedral

12.15pm - Prayer Vigil in St. Dunstan's Chapel (near main door)
lasting 30 minutes

Gathering outside for 1.03pm for 1 minute banner witness.

NO MORE 1 IN 3 Campaign

Members around the world raise awareness of the fact that 1 in 3 women will suffer from some form of violence during their lifetime.

Mothers' Union Membership Subscription for 2025 is £24.50. This amount will all go to the central charity and equates to just over £2 per month, per member. Ely Diocesan MU will not levy any extra charge.

**PLEASE BRING
LIGHT INTO THE
LIVES OF
MOTHERS LIKE
FRANCINE THIS
CHRISTMAS**



Give online at
www.mothersunion.org/christmas24
between 3rd December and 10th
December, to have your gift amount
matched in the Big Give.

If you can Gift Aid every £1 of your
gift will be worth 25p more.

My name is Francine Nsabimana and I live with my husband Jerome and our six children in a village called Bibuye in the country of Burundi.

I am saddened to say that I used to have no peace in my heart or in my family.

I was really miserable, with no money for food or clothes and I didn't live in perfect harmony with my husband, because we didn't have the words to speak to each other. **We lived in a straw house with a roof that let the rainwater in. I was always afraid that it would fall onto my children one day.**

I didn't have clean clothes or soap to wash myself so I didn't want to go to church and I was afraid to approach others to find out how I could improve my life, as I knew no better.

One day I heard about this programme from my neighbours who told me that there is a literacy and numeracy circle opened by Mothers' Union in my parish. So I joined even though I felt ashamed of how I looked. I hoped that this programme would improve my living situation.

Francine's story is one of transformation. Thanks to the One More Step programme, she not only lifted her family out of poverty but strengthened her faith and her community. "I learned to manage our household and save for our family's future. I also learned how to strengthen my relationship with God. I pray deeply and also I am able to pray for me, my children and others. I now have confidence and hope"

With your help, we can expand this successful pilot to 6 more dioceses in Burundi, reaching 4,000 people in the first year alone. By supporting literacy circles and savings groups, we'll empower women to overcome gender inequality, improve agricultural practices, build business knowledge and reduce gender-based violence in their communities.

**HOW YOUR KIND
GIFT WILL HELP**

It could buy the seeds and fertilizer to help people start a farming business in communities like Bibuye.

It could help cover the running costs of a literacy programme for mothers like Francine.

It could help cover the costs of setting up a small farmers' co-operative so subsistence farmers can grow a future.

Stapleford Mothers' Union is saddened to announce the passing of Denise Craney, erstwhile leader of the Branch and a very long-standing member of the Mothers' Union. Her kindness and generosity of spirit will be sorely missed. Hilary Street.

Our congratulations and best wishes go to Ken Fletcher, a diocesan member and past treasurer for Mothers' Union Ely Diocese. He celebrated his 90th birthday on 1st November.

Out of curiosity I recently checked on-line for which “Awareness Days” were coming up in November and I was genuinely astonished at the range of contenders: everything from a World Kindness Day to a World Vegan Day; there is an Apple Day, a Brush Day (!), there is even a Social Media Awareness month, a National Spa week and a National Sandwich Day (honestly, these are all listed on-line, I am not making it up). Unsurprisingly perhaps, among the vast range of special days, weeks or months there is no mention of any need of “being prepared for God to come”.

Whilst it is no doubt good to bring many of these causes to mind, Luke reminds us in 12:40 that “you must also be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” The one thing foremost in our minds should be “are we ready?”. How many times have we parted from someone and almost immediately thought of something we had intended to say or do – but it is now too late. We do not want to be in a similar position should we find ourselves face to face with our Lord, because what we have not done will no longer be possible.

So, what are we supposed to have done? A recent Sunday sermon in my parish church gave the answer to that in a consideration of Mark 10:35-45. If you read that section, you will see that we are expected to be humble, be a servant and serve all. This is where the passage “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” appears. Matthew 6:19 refers to the need for us not to seek our reward on earth but in heaven “where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” – in other words, a reward which is durable and lasting. It is a guide we would do well to follow, be humble, act like Jesus, serving others without expecting any reward, other than God’s. Perhaps the World Kindness Day is not so far off the mark after all!



Congratulations to St. Neots oldest MU member, Pauline Keatley, who turned 97 on 29th September. Also in the photo is Canon Robert Sibson a retired priest (whose wife Elizabeth is our branch treasurer). Pauline was a member of Somersham branch for many years before moving to St Neots.
Liz Elson



Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom
10.30am 28th November
Presented by Debbie Tye.
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>
Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode: 080127

Ely Diocesan M U Charity no. 251394
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

Ely Cathedral Branch

Our MU Stall at Ely Cathedral Open Afternoon on Saturday October 12th. *Gail Swanson*



COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. *Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator*

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **OCTOBER THURSDAY PRAYER:**

“Peace: Week of Prayer for World Peace”. Led by Sue Claydon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dRqcmH3dg4>

“Life During Lockdown” Photo Competition and YouTube Channel.

Many of you will remember the Photo Competition we ran during the time of Covid lockdown. Members submitted up to 3 photos of something that meant anything to them throughout this time. There were so many lovely photos from people representing different aspects during the lockdown and memorable moments. I am repeating the link now because our **YouTube Channel will enable you again to see a video of the photos that were submitted.** It has been posted as an “unlisted” video which means it is “semi-private” and can only be seen if you have the link. You are welcome to share this with family and friends.

Here is the link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMuzeJuxz_c
(Ctrl + Click to follow link)

I enjoyed seeing again these lovely photos with their musical background and thanks go to Debbie Tye who put it together.
Hazel

Resources that will be useful if you are using the RISE UP campaign as part of your 16 Days of Activism from Emily Brailsford – *National programme Manager MU*

I am writing to ask if there is anything I can do to help you with the RISE UP! campaign. I am more than happy to speak to you and your diocese, on Zoom or in person, about the campaign and how easy it is to achieve the Bronze level. There are lots of resources on the MU Resource Hub which can be accessed using this link: -

<https://mothersunionresourcehub.com/shared/5ctddm6p>

and there is also a ready-made branch pack which can be accessed here: -

<https://mothersunionresourcehub.com/shared/bpvzlrwg>

There are still all the resources which can be found on the Mothers' Union website here: -

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

The MU Theme for 2025 is

Join Us and Join In

MU is changing lives

Dates of Future Meetings

Sat. 22nd March at 2pm

Service and Commissioning of New Trustees

St. Mary's, Ely,
Banners to be paraded

Canterbury Provincial Gathering

Sat. 27th September 2025

Oxford, The King's Centre

Global gathering in St. Paul's Cathedral on 10th June 2026 to celebrate 150 years of MU

This is a report by the Church of Nigeria Communication officer of an address given by Mrs Angela Ndukuba, President of the Mothers' Union in Nigeria. If you look closely at the photo you can see her Mothers' Union badge.

Have the Mind of Christ in You. *Mrs Angela Ndukuba*



Mrs Angela Ndukuba, the President, Mothers Union/Women's Guild and Girls Organisation of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has called on all leaders, Christian and especially women to embrace the mind of Christ in all they are doing to reduce challenges, misunderstanding, fighting, struggles and competition to overtake one another which is facing many facets of life today. She made this call while delivering her recent presidential address at the 25th edition of the annual women conference of the Diocese of Abuja,

She opined that servant-leadership style has remained the hallmark of the body of Christ.

"Jesus gives us practical examples as believers and leaders in our different capacities. Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians presented Jesus and His exceptional humility as the perfect example for Christians. The servant's heart of a leader is illustrated with the humility that Christ displayed in coming to earth. She added that allowing and letting this mind of Christ be in everyone will promote our appreciation and tolerance for one another and will represent Christ in better image before men and women in this generation and generations to come.

"I humbly invite us to prayerfully accept, adopt and follow Jesus Christ as our role model as we journey in our Christian pilgrim progress to eternal life. You can make it in Jesus' name. It starts by surrendering your life to Jesus, and desiring to be like him in thought, word and deed."

On the state of the nation, Mrs Angela urged the Federal Government of Nigeria to issue licenses to modular refinery operators to boost the production of petrol and to reduce the pump price of the product at the filling stations. She stated that the removal of fuel subsidy in May 2023 has continued to increase hardship among citizens. We are calling on the Federal Government to restore the fuel subsidy or make our refineries work.

"The high cost of transportation has affected every aspect of the lives of Nigerians and contributed to high inflation figures. Some people had to resign from their employment because of high transportation costs.

Capable interested Individuals should be given licenses to own standard modular refineries that will reduce the number of illegal refineries being dictated regularly. Reputable existing private refineries in Nigeria should be allowed to function and serve the people directly and Nigeria should stop the importation of refined petroleum products and encourage local production".

Mrs Ndukuba urged organisers of protests in the country to sheathe their swords and embrace dialogue, saying that protests are often hijacked by suspected hoodlums to unleash more hardship on Nigerians. She called on the Federal Government to listen to the issues raised by the protesters and find a lasting solution to alleviate the conditions and sufferings of the people.

“The Mothers’ Union are the heart and love of the Church” Archbishop Justin Welby

As I write this, the day after returning from the diocesan retreat at Highgate House, I am very conscious of the love that was shared there; and as it’s the Monday of Half Term week, of one family travelling to Hunstanton today for one of our Afia Holidays, enabled by us, members who have shared our love with them, through fundraising.

I received this feedback from a new referrer –

“Z really enjoyed being away with mum, grandma and her sister L. The family had time to relax. Z and mum loved swimming in the sea. Z had the chance to spend a lot of time with mum on her own as at home mum is busy with looking after L. The trip had positive impact on Z’s wellbeing.

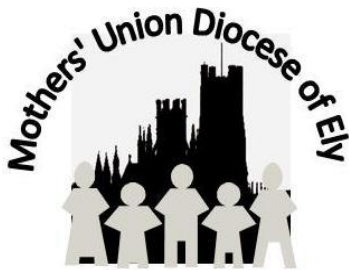
Mum managed to go for a long walk on her own, which never happens at home. The trip provided her with opportunity to relax, reflect and recharge”.

We now look forward to the Christmas season, and Our Wish is to help those whose lives are not as fortunate as ours. The Refuges and Hostels we support really appreciate supermarket vouchers to give to their clients, as this enables the recipients to have the gift of CHOICE, so often denied to them by circumstances.

I have noted below the preferred vouchers for each place. If branches could arrange to send/ deliver vouchers (£10 value ideal) to our local contacts to pass on, that would be a great help. Some vouchers are easily ordered online (I’ve used Aldi and Asda).

Mary’s Child charity in Farcet, Fletton and Stanground is continuing, despite the recent sad death of founder Revd. Carol Avery. They would appreciate Selection Boxes and Toiletry Sets for teenagers and adults, male and female. THANK YOU! Our contacts and the preferred store vouchers for each are;

<p>Mid-Cambs Refuge Liz Elson 11. Mobile Home Park, Eynesbury, St Neots PE19 2JR Iceland, Tesco, Lidl</p>	<p>Whitworth House (young women) Jo Wibberley 13 Missleton Court Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 8BL Primark</p>
<p>Fenland Refuge Sue Claydon 112 Whittlesey Road March PE15 0AH Asda, Aldi</p>	<p>Wheatsheaf Close, (young people) Jean Webb 35 Norfolk Road Ely, CB6 3EJ Aldi, Tesco, Argos</p>
<p>Cambridge Women’s Aid CWA, PO Box 302 Cambridge CB1 1EA Any store vouchers</p>	<p>Mary’s Child Collections can be delivered to Maureen Haigh 69 High Street, Haddenham Ely CB6 3XB or Jean Webb (as above) by the end of November please.</p>



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Newsletter December 2024



*CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO ALL FROM
ELY DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION*

MU RETREAT, HIGHGATE HOUSE, CREATON, NORTHANTS: 25-27 OCTOBER 2024



A weekend away at this country retreat house was a real blessing at the end of October. Philip Baker was instrumental in arranging and organising the accommodation and the programme, with Revd Paula Spalding leading the Services. Highgate House became part of the Christian Conference Trust this year, which has two other centres serving churches and Christian charities and organisations.

We arrived on Friday afternoon and were warmly welcomed with afternoon tea, before settling into our rooms, and then gathering together for Evening Prayer. Then there was a chance to admire the lovely scenery and beautiful sunset before we had dinner. We had several Bible Study sessions throughout the weekend, with free time in between each session, to have some quiet time, read and pray, or explore the grounds and the historic Manor House – as well as enjoying lots of chat and tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits! A Nature Trail provided an opportunity to wander through the trees and fields around the hotel. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner were also included each day, with a choice of menus and enjoyable food.

There were 20 of us all together, mostly from the Ely Diocese, with two joining us from the neighbouring Dioceses of Peterborough and St Edmundsbury & Ipswich. The Bible Studies were based on well-known Songs and Prayers from the Old and New Testament. Each day started with Morning Prayer, then Evening Prayer before dinner, and finishing with Night Prayer (Compline) at the end of the day. Sunday morning worship included Holy Communion and I found this very meaningful to share in this special time together. In between we had a few study sessions during

the day and evening exploring the passages and sharing together. Paula had created an interactive prayer corner in one of our meeting rooms.

The readings included: Psalm 103; David's Prayer (1Chronicles 29:10-14); Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55); the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10); and the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79). Each different passage sparked thoughts and comments about our faith and the faith of the Bible characters involved. I learnt a lot about these passages and gained some new insights. If Philip thought we might be stuck for conversation during the sessions, he was proved wrong by how engaged we were with the subject matter and discussions. We readily enjoyed the suggestion of singing some hymns and songs. (I think I would have liked more music content as well.)

The weekend concluded on Sunday afternoon with a "Feedback" session which had positive comments for all the hard work that Philip and Paula had put in. Another time it would be nice to have one longer break with free time during the weekend, to allow opportunity for more extended reading/praying/quiet times or exploring our surroundings. Although we weren't a very large group, smaller break-out sessions might have given more people the opportunity to engage with the conversations and share our thoughts.



Members of the RCI group who were also meeting at the centre. All very elegantly dressed compared to our much more casual wear.

We joined in part of a very energetic worship session including lots of music and singing.



During the weekend another group from the Reformed Church International (Zimbabwe) arrived. We were invited to join in with one of their (lively) worship sessions. One of ministers sent me a video taken of a few of us dancing! I hope to be able to put together a YouTube picture video showing some of the photos taken over the weekend, and will try and include the RCZ video.

The Centre staff were so friendly and helpful which made for a pleasant atmosphere. The company had only taken over the premises in June this year, when refurbishment of the building was completed, they were keen to ensure we had a good time and that any comments for improvements or issues were taken on board.

We think this retreat might be a "first" for MU in the Ely Diocese. It would be great to have another opportunity to do something similar another year. A "Very Big Thank You" to Philip and Paula for leading the weekend so ably and thoughtfully. I came home feeling rested and spiritually refreshed, having enjoyed the fellowship of the group – with a chance to catch up with fellow MU Members and also be able to make some new friendships.

Debbie Tye

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union Board of Trustees

We have come to the end of this triennium and many of the trustees have finished the six years maximum that they are able to stay in one post. Only one person has come forward to join the trustee board. This means that there will be some familiar faces continuing on the board but in different positions and I will give a complete list in the January Newsletter.

No-one has come forward to take the president's position so the decision has been made that three trustees will work together to cover this role and will be called vice-presidents. They will be Jean Webb, Debbie Tye and Hazel Williams, all names very familiar to you. We are fortunate that, unlike some diocese, we will continue to have enough people to lead on all of the areas we presently cover.

CHRISTIAN HOPE INTERNATIONAL

This year, Joanna and I have been given many knitted donations to go in the container which goes to countries in need of them.

I received a letter of thanks from the office in Romford.

'It is 30 years since Christian Hope International first came into being, as a result of the horrendous events of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The first things that were requested were blankets and knits for the children, as the children and babies were dying from the cold. This was how Stitches of Hope was born, to save lives in Rwanda. Since then, hundreds of knitted items have been sent to Africa and more recently to the poorest countries in Eastern Europe. When war broke out in February in Ukraine, many of our handmade items brought hope and comfort to those who really need to feel remembered.

Over the past 30 years Christian Hope International has grown and now works through the Anglican Church both in Rwanda and Uganda, now supporting both children and adults and many projects to help those in need.

The organisers appreciate our support and wish to pass on their thanks.'

Maureen Haigh

Thank you from me to all our knitters, and please keep knitting so we can keep on donating to those in need.



Haddenham MU branch this Christmas sent bags containing essential items to the Sick Children's Trust to give to parents who unexpectedly have to stay at the hospital with their child.



Tell me what is happening at your Branch

I would love to spread the news and /or photographs of anything that is taking place where you are.

It is always interesting and can give other branches and groups new ideas.

Hazel

Faith In Action – December 2024

Lots of Thank You's this month

Gifts of toiletry sets and chocolate selection boxes have started arriving for me to take to Mary's Child next week (along with a huge selection of excellent bedding, and other items). The Local Management Group is determined that they will continue the work that the Rev Carol Avery so passionately started, as a Living Legacy to her.

The Diocesan Trustees will be saying Thank You to Di Sabel for organising the Afia Holidays I am extremely grateful to her for taking this on, and doing it with care, compassion and competency. Thank You Di from all the families you have been involved with over the last five years.

Bottisham Brownies have kindly collected about 20 wallets and purses for Afia pocket money next year.

Our contacts for the Refuges and Hostels are happy to receive vouchers, and other items. Thank you for your fundraising efforts and generosity.

Thank you Haddenham branch for filling the Christmas bags for the Sick Children's Trust this year.

2 bags of knitted hat/scarf and mitt sets are going to the Haven Shelter for homeless/ rough sleeper women (Thank you to the Ely St Mary's member who knitted them all) this follows the very interesting talk we had at our Autumn Diocesan Meeting at Waterbeach, by Diana, a supporter of the project. We amassed a staggering amount of toiletries for which they are very grateful. It is good for us to have another project to support, in Cambridge.

We are in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence until December 10th, and there is a display in the South transept of Ely Cathedral; with a prayer focus for each of the 16 days.

As we come to the end of this triennium, and having completed 6 years in this Trustee position, I will be moving on to other challenges in January (producing the Annual Report to start with!) Maureen will continue as Local Projects Officer (thank you Maureen) and happy to receive domestic items as usual.

I will still be the contact for the knitted items for the Dementia ward at Hinchingsbrooke.

It has been a very interesting six years, and I have learnt so much about the support needed for people in our community.

Jean Webb



This is the only item from the **Banner Exhibition** that has not got a home. If you recognise it as belonging to your branch, please get in touch so that it can be returned.

Ely Diocesan M U Charity no. 251394
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom
10.30am on 12th October
Deidre Milner
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>
Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode: 080127

At St George's Church, Littleport we have once again put on a display in the church advertising 16 days of Activism against Gender based Violence.

The red chair is up, draped with red ribbons threaded with notes about Rise Up. We have also displayed white & purple ribbons with information cards on a small tree. On our MU notice board contact numbers have been given for those requiring help.

On the first Sunday of the 16 days prayers were led by a MU member and a basket was put out containing white and purple ribbons attached to information cards with the QR code on.

Our secretary is taking part in an art exhibition, 'Hidden' in The House of Smalls, Edinburgh the exhibition is about Gender based violence. She sent the Mothers' Union information about Rise Up with her artwork which the gallery will display at the exhibition.



THE HOUSE OF SMALLS
ART GALLERY
HIDDEN

21 NOVEMBER – 22 DECEMBER 2024

TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH 25 NOVEMBER - WHITE RIBBON DAY, THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AND THE START OF 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE - THIS IS AN EXHIBITION OF ARTWORK BY 60 WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE IN ANY OF ITS MANY FORMS.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS EXHIBITION CONTAINS ARTWORK AND TEXT WHICH MAY BE UPSETTING. PLEASE TAKE CARE WHEN VIEWING.

MON: CLOSED
TUES - SAT: 11AM - 6PM
SUN: 12PM - 5PM
(These times are subject to change at short notice, please check social media)

103 HENDERSON ROW
STOCKBRIDGE
EDINBURGH EH3 5BB
@thehouseofsmalls
www.thehouseofsmalls.art

BREAKING THE... 



WAVE OF PRAYER 10th to 12th DECEMBER

This year there will be a flexible approach to filling our time during the Wave of Prayer. With less branches to cover the three days, the time slots have become much longer and some days or times are difficult for branches to achieve. Branch leaders will have a suggested day for their branch, but no time slot.

To help fill our time of prayer, I have produced a word search of our Worldwide Links for members to do at home, **DURING THE THREE DAYS.** While searching for the Countries, Diocese and names, you will be thinking about them and perhaps saying a prayer for them when each is found.

Irene Porter Worldwide Links

The wave of prayer documents were sent out to branch leaders the week beginning 17th November. If you are unable to meet with your branch to pray together, please use the information to pray at home.

There are also two separate attachments with this newsletter. One is the word search mentioned above and the other is information from Yaxley branch and their link in Cyangugu Diocese in Rwanda explaining the work that the Mothers' Union do in their area, with some lovely photographs.

Hazel

A REFLECTION – December

As we approach Christmas our thoughts turn to the joy of welcoming the baby who would become our Saviour. It is a wonderful time summed up in the phrase "Goodwill to all men" (and women, children, of all races, colour and faith). Or is it? That joy seems to evaporate so quickly in the gloom of British winter weather. Yet everything that Christmas, and Jesus, stands for is still there, therefore so too should our joy be.

I recently came across these words, presented in the form of a joke notice in a library – "The post apocalyptic fiction section has been moved to current affairs." And this is, I think, the true cause of our depression. The worst thing to deal with is uncertainty and we live in a world in which we have instant notification of events worldwide but we do not know what calamity is round the corner. But we do know that far too many people have the power of catastrophic destruction. No wonder we are worried.

My prayer this and every day is for self-interest to be turned into love of others and into the search for peace so espoused by Jesus. There are so many well-known passages in the bible speaking of love and peace, perhaps none more precious than Jesus' words captured in John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you: love one another. As I have loved you so you must love one another".

The mindset prevalent among leaders of nations puts me in mind of another light-hearted but pointed quip – "Before we work on Artificial Intelligence should we not do something about Natural Stupidity?" Might I suggest that we harness these thoughts to extend the joy of Christmas through January and even beyond? Just as the old saying "a dog is not just for Christmas" is true, so too is "Jesus is not just for Christmas"! His teachings reported so thoroughly and clearly by the gospel-writers apply to us today just as much as they did 2000 years ago. His birth arguably means even more now than it did then because we understand its significance better. What Joy!

Philip Baker (21st November 2024)

