

**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

# Newsletter January



**Jo Wibberley is standing down as a trustee of Ely Mothers' Union after 26 years.**

Jo and her husband moved to Cambridge in 1997. As a vicar's wife she was actively involved in MU in the diocese they had come from so, as we had no Action & Outreach Co-ordinator, in 1998 I asked Jo to take this on. She continued to be an active member taking on many roles over the years.

1998 - 2003	Action & Outreach Unit Co-ordinator
2004 - 2009	Finance and Central Services Unit Co-ordinator
2010 - 2012	Cambridge Archdeaconry Vice-President
2013 - 2015	Cambridge Archdeaconry VP and F&CS Unit Coordinator
2016 - 2018	F&CS Unit Co-ordinator
2019 - 2024	Cambridge Archdeaconry VP

*(Information from Della Fletcher)*

Jo has worked with a number of branches, particularly in the Cambridge area, as well as serving on the Board of Whitworth House supporting young women in need. Many of you met her on her cycling trip across the whole of the Cambridge Archdeaconry in 2015, as well as reading about her static 'journey' in her garden during Covid. Both raised awareness of the Mothers' Union as well as substantial funds. She had a Ukrainian family living with her in her home and they recently moved into their own house in Cambridge. Although Jo will no longer be a trustee she will continue to work with Whitworth House.

**Gill Uttin** is also finishing her term as a Trustee. She has in recent years been Vice-President for the Cambridge Archdeaconry and before that served as our Worldwide Officer, keeping members informed about the work taking place across the world as well as giving many talks to branches.

**Catherina Griffiths** will finish her administration and finance trustee role too but will continue as minutes secretary to the trustees.

Our thanks go to them for all they have done for the Mothers' Union over many years.

Our new trustee joining us is **Christine Mitchell** and other trustees will be changing roles, as it is the start of a new triennium. Names and roles will be reported in the next newsletter in February.



### St George's MU Wave of Prayer

A small group of us met for this year's Wave of Prayer at St George's Littleport.

We lit candles which were placed on the maps for Zambia, Rwanda, India and for Nigeria, then prayed for each area. A candle was also lit for Ely. Between the prayers for each place, we had a time of quiet contemplation, thinking of these different areas, and listening to quiet music from Taizé.

Over our table we had an Indian marriage canopy, the vibrant pinks and golds catching the candlelight and brightening up a gloomy December morning.

At the end of our prayer time, we had tea, coffee and mince pies. Our Wave of Prayer materials are displayed in our MU corner of the church.

*Julianne Long. Dec 2024*

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**Burwell Church** held its first Christmas Tree Exhibition over Christmas 2024, with displays from church groups and local community groups. This picture is of the decorated Mothers Union tree, in pride of place in the porch, where the decorations included many small knitted stockings.

These will be used in 2025, during the Christmas period, filled with sweets such as tubes of smarties. They will go to the children of visiting families of men at Littlehay Prison.

**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on  
Zoom 10.30am on 16th January**

**Hazel Williams**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628  
?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDI  
K.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1)

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628**

**Passcode: 080127**



The photo shows only a fraction of the toiletries provided by members and their friends this Christmas. Thank you to all of you. *Maureen Haigh*

**A bequest** of £1,000 was given to the Mothers' Union in Ely Diocese earlier this year. The trustees agreed that it should be sent on to the Christmas Appeal and will be used to expand a successful pilot in Burundi. It will provide support by empowering women through literacy circles and savings groups, improving agricultural practices, reducing violence and building stronger communities.

#### COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS. **Debbie Tye**

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

**NOVEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER:** "Campaigning for Christ" – Led by Debbie Tye.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPngMPk-DI>

**DECEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER:** "The Good News" – Led by Deirdre Milner.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gT6lZ1rcdgl>

Please would those on Zoom remember to mute their computer during the service. The quality of the recording can be reduced if this does not happen.

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Congratulations to Kay Coe of **Stapleford Mothers' Union** on her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on 23 January! Kay is a very longstanding member of the Branch and has in her time been Branch Leader. She is a friend to us all and deeply valued and loved by all our members.

*Hilary Street*

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I will be continuing to compile the monthly **Newsletter** this triennium and would like to hear news or other items from any members or branches. Photographs are nice but not essential. I think there is a lot happening in Ely Diocese that we do not hear about. Please think about what you could contribute.

*Hazel Williams*

Ely Diocesan M U Charity no. 251394 <https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

Ros 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)





## Whitworth House

I took a photo of the Christmas gifts for Whitworth House. Instead of Primark vouchers, one branch had given me One4All vouchers which seemed more versatile so I bought the same with donations to treat everyone equally.

Two tins of biscuits for the staff, though they were short staffed at the time. They hope to interview early in the new year.

Jo Wibberley

This photo shows the MU tree for **Balsham's Christmas Tree Festival**. The writing with it explains that Balsham Mothers' Union was founded in 1897 and that the MU now has 4 million members in 86 countries. It also tells people about our special links with diocese across the world. Photographs of countries across the world who have an MU were also displayed.

Joanna Sanders



## Prayer for January 2025

*Prayer is not powerful because of who is praying but because of who is listening. – M. Pilavachi.*

We thank you Lord for the year that is past, for the privilege and opportunity to serve you in practical ways through our Mothers' Union membership.

Lord, guide us as we go forward joyfully into this New Year. We pray for all who serve you in MSH, Worldwide, and especially those taking up leadership roles in the Mothers' Union. Be their inspiration and guide, providing them with wisdom for their various tasks. Bless them and all members with strength and energy as we continue to share your love in our service to your Church and the families in our communities.

We pray for Governments and all in leadership in the nations of our world. Grant healing and comfort to the victims of war and violence, abuse, the homeless, refugees, all in distress and need. Those whom we have forgotten, we ask you Lord, to remember.

May the God of hope and love fill us with Joy and Peace in the power of the Holy Spirit as we trust Him in this New Year and for evermore. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**





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## NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2025



Presentations were made to Hazel, Di and Jo as they relinquished their posts at the end of the triennium. They will all still be supporting the Mothers' Union, together with Jean (in yellow), but in different ways. On the next page is a list of new positions and when the new Branch Directory is published next month there will be contact details of trustees and branches.

**All members, family and friends are invited to our**

### **COMMISSIONING SERVICE**

**St. Mary's Church, Ely**

**Saturday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2pm**

**Celebrant and Preacher**

**Rt Revd Dr Dagmar Winter, Bishop of Huntingdon**

**Banners will be paraded. Tea and Cake. MUE cards on sale.**

**Having seen so many banners on display in the Cathedral last year it would be wonderful to see them again at our Commissioning Service for trustees and leaders.**

## **MU Trustees and Activity Leaders in Ely Diocese**

### **Vice-Presidents**

Jean Webb, Debbie Tye, Hazel Williams

### **Branch Liaison Officers**

Helen Banyard, Maureen Haigh

### **Praying Our Faith**

Prayer, Quiet Days, Thursday Prayer Christine Holt

Worldwide Irene Porter

Indoor Members Joanna Sanders

Clergy Liaison Della Fletcher

Chaplain Revd. Paula Spalding

### **Communications**

Events and publicity Debbie Tye

Diocesan Members Debbie Tye

Communications  
(social media and website) Holli Bielby

MU Enterprises Hazel Williams

Newsletter Hazel Williams

Cathedral Display Penny Hall, Mary Finney

### **Finance and Administration**

Finance and Administration Jean Webb

Treasurer Derek Tye

Safeguarding Hazel Williams

### **Faith In Action**

Local Projects (collection &  
distribution of items) Maureen Haigh

Prison Support Catherina Griffiths

AFIA Hazel Williams

AFIA officer Ros Wright

### **Trustees**

Jean Webb, Debbie Tye, Hazel Williams, Chris Mitchell  
Helen Banyard, Maureen Haigh, Christine Holt,

Minutes Secretary Catherina Griffiths

Diocesan Secretary Ros Wright



## **St.Neots Branch**

St Neots Branch have had a busy start to Advent. We took part in a local Christmas Tree Festival with a beautifully decorated tree by Andrea Eckloff, daughter of one of our members.

The tree was on display a few days later at the Deanery Advent Carol Service and lunch hosted by us. At that service, Serena Gilbert, one of our church members was admitted to MU membership by Canon Robert Sibson who led the service.

The following week we held our Wave of Prayer in the Lady Chapel at St Neots Church. Liz Elson, Branch leader led this with personal artefacts from most of our link countries. Once again, the MU tree was on display.

**Mothers' Union Membership Subscription is £24.50 for this year. This will all go to Mary Sumner House and there will be no MU Diocesan subscription.**

**If you are a taxpayer and therefore able to claim Gift Aid, Ely Diocesan MU would receive £6.12 for each individual.**

**Derek Tye, our treasurer, sent a form last year by e-mail to each branch that they can copy for you to fill in, if you do not already use Gift Aid. A copy is included in this mailing too. 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. If you have already paid your subscription for this year, it is not too late to send a completed form to Derek ([derektye@hotmail.com](mailto:derektye@hotmail.com))**

## **Diocesan Membership**

If you live in an area that does not have a Mothers' Union branch, but would like to support the MU in their worldwide work, please consider joining as a Diocesan Member. Subscription is the same as branch membership, this year £24.50, but newsletters and other information comes direct to your in-box or is posted to you instead of coming via the branch. If you would like to know more get in touch with Debbie Tye at [dmtypost@hotmail.com](mailto:dmtypost@hotmail.com) or ring Hazel or Ros (details in newsletter) and they will pass on your request for information.





The **March Deanery Branch** twice a year do the monthly Christian Aid lunch. These are organised by March Churches Together. We supply the meal and serve etc

This year the Branch also donated toys to the March Food bank where they were very welcome as the only things for children. Sue



From the **March Deanery Branch** for the women at Fenland Refuge.

Along with toiletries socks were also sent. The Refuge wants to thank all those who donated vouchers which were most appreciated. Sue

### **Daphne Linsey 1935-2025 Milton Branch**

With sadness we inform you of the death of Daphne Linsey, treasurer of the Milton branch for over 30 years.

Daphne was a passionate MU member. She volunteered regularly at Little Hey prison, in the visitor centre and organised the rota of helpers. Sunday mornings Daphne enjoyed joining in with the prisoners in their Sunday services. Later she helped Beryl with the very popular relationship courses.

All this time Daphne was knitting seemingly faster than a knitting machine. She was known as the Knitting Queen. Her Nativity sets have gone all over the country.

The Mothers' Union and all of us will sorely miss her.

The funeral will be on 12<sup>th</sup> February in All Saints Church Milton at 12 noon.

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**ADVANCE NOTICE - Spring Diocesan meeting and AGM will take place at St. Peter's Church, March on Friday 25th April at 9.30am for 10am.**

## Lady Day Service

This year St George's Littleport are hosting the Lady Day service on March 25th at 2.30. It will be a communion service led by our vicar, Natalie Andrews followed by light refreshments in the church hall. Please can branch secretaries send rough numbers of those attending to Julieanne Long [julianne@textileartist.co.uk](mailto:julianne@textileartist.co.uk)

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## A REFLECTION

*Philip Baker (15<sup>th</sup> January 2025)*

This is the season when we look to the year ahead and start planning for all those changes that, this year without fail, we will finally get to do. Decorating a room (or more), a garden makeover, the holiday we have been thinking about for years; most, if not all, pipedreams which, if we were honest with ourselves, we know we will still be thinking about in a year's time. And yet it is human nature to want, well, almost anything! We are never content with what we have and are always planning for something different. It is a human condition.

How often do we think about what we have just celebrated – Christmas? The arrival on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. There can be no bigger change than this, nothing could ever be the same once God's Son was with us as a fellow human being. We need to think about what this really means for us, certainly more than His contemporaries did – they found Jesus inconvenient, what we would today call a “disrupter”. And of course He was meant to be but no-one really likes having their routines disturbed do they, so they crucified Him. But that did not get rid of Him. We will soon be starting to think about what happened then – Jesus defeating death and rising again in glory, which was not the outcome the Pharisees had in mind!

Given the parlous state the world is in, largely as an outcome of all the unintended consequences of a world-full of people all individually planning changes based upon their own priorities without regard for everyone else, perhaps what we should all be wanting achieve this year is recognise the place of God in our lives. There are no end of biblical sources supporting the general contention that if we have God in our lives we have all we need, such as Psalm 16:5 or Philippians 4:19 and the most beautiful Psalm 23. Letting God be a part of our lives and plans has a calming influence, and recognising that all we have to do is live in the footsteps of Jesus Christ (or at least try to) might give us a little peace amid all the striving of our combative world.

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The Mary Sumner choir, made up with two members from each parish in the diocese of Lusaka, Zambia, sang at the 33rd commemoration of Zambia as a Christian Nation. If you are able, you can hear them on the Proudly Anglican face book page.

**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom  
10.30am on 20th February**

**Debbie Tye**

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

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628**

**Ely Diocesan M U Charity no. 251394**

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

**Ros 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)**

**Hazel 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)**

**MiniMU MU members in Somersham** have been very active in collecting stuff for Mary's Child – and other charities supported by Ely MU. On that note one of our members wrote the attached reflection - and asked me to send it to you.

Every blessing

Val Kilner

#### OF MOLES & MINIMUM

Several years' ago, in another country, I was sitting on a low wall in the sunshine, working out in my head how I could renovate a little stone house of two or three hundred years past. It would have to be done tastefully without losing its charm. I would have to scrape down the oak rafters, for a start. And the "patio" in front of the wooden door was partly stones and partly concrete. Wallflowers bloomed through the cracks. My neighbours thought I should knock it down and built another ..... then where would the ghost go?

Suddenly, without a sound, a mole popped its head through the rubble, right in front of me! It arrived on a puff of dry earth, stared wide-eyed at me for a few seconds and then disappeared exactly how it had arrived. Didn't turn around, just disappeared with a quiet "plop". I am not sure which one of us was the most surprised. First time I had seen a mole up close. I was amazed at the speed of him.

It occurs to me that Mothers' Union ladies often operate in a similar way to the moles. They use their own methods and channels of operation like the moles' galleries, they do their work quietly and without advertising, they travel great distances to meet other ladies abroad who are dedicated to improving their own and others' lives. They perform small miracles every day, they knit, sew, teach and carry huge weights of items in their collections for the homeless and other charities. Their faith in God is paramount. And they are so rarely seen in action!

The other day I rang my friend M. to ask her to call by for a shoebox full of little baby sweaters I had knitted. I mentioned that there was nothing much going on at my end regarding collection of unwanted small furniture, or clothing. Put down the phone, switched on my computer – and there was a request from J. She had met a lady at the village's get-together who was anxious to find someone who would want the contents of her caravan she had just sold. It was essential she find somebody efficient quickly. Would the MU want these items? Yes, we would!. So I took the telephone number of the donor from J., checked that the items were in good state, rang M. again to be sure she and her dear husband could pick up the items and make arrangements to collect direct between them, the lady being in our village. I used to do the lifting but age has crept up on me.

M. had hoped to clear pre-Christmas donations from her garage during the week but everything happened so fast. The donor was desperate to get the caravan items out of her kitchen – they were all over the floor, she said. So by the time M. called by at my home for the baby sweaters on the Sunday the caravan items had all been wrapped up by the lady donor, all pristine and ready to go, M. and G. had shifted the lot!

J. had been down to my house for the second time, with two large kitchen knives to donate. All this activity happened over three days! Telephones ran hot.

So three dedicated Minimum MU Mole-Members toiled at speed to get another job done. Phew!

PS: I did renovate the Little House beautifully.

This whimsy is written by Gillian.

01/2025





## COMMUNICATIONS

### NEW YouTube VIDEO.

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

"Joining God Where He is Working". Led by Hazel Williams.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LfEUXQEu\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LfEUXQEu_I)

The photograph shows MU members enjoying refreshments at The Almonry after our regular Thursday Prayer at The Cathedral.

Debbie Tye

**Win Norton** sadly died recently, at the age of 93, and her funeral was held on 5<sup>th</sup> February in Swaffham Bulbeck church. She was a member of the MU for many years and a number of you will remember her because for several years she sold cards and other MU items to members, often with the help of her husband David.

She was also very involved in supporting the Women's Shelter (now Cambridge Refuge) acting as liaison (and delivering) items between MU members and the Shelter.

Our thoughts are with her family at this time. May Win rest in peace and rise in glory.

### **We need your help!**

Sherly, pictured above with Jean, a dementia nurse at Hinchingbrooke Hospital has contacted Mothers' Union.

One of the wards is taking part in a quality improvement project, introducing brightly coloured and patterned knitted blankets for patients with dementia, to reduce falls.

The blankets need to be 3 feet by 3 feet approximately.

Would this be a good 2025 Branch project for you?

Please contact Maureen Haigh for any queries (01353 749760; email [gmhaigh@talk21.com](mailto:gmhaigh@talk21.com))

**Patterns are also available for Twiddle muffs, Canula sleeves, Adult Lady Fingerless mitts, Levi Lovey, baby hats, baby coats, and blankets**

## Newsletter March 2025



### HRH Duchess of Edinburgh Is the new Patron of the Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union has had the privilege of enjoying royal patronage since its foundation in 1876, and we are delighted, as we approach our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026, that Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Edinburgh, has accepted the invitation to continue this tradition.

"We are honoured that Her Royal Highness has chosen to join us as patron," says **Mothers' Union Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow**. "The Duchess will bring strength and inspiration for the work we all do. We are especially grateful for Her Royal Highness's experience and commitment to championing the most marginalised, particularly those who are impacted by violence and abuse in conflict, a cause we are passionate about, because conflict disproportionately affects women and children. As a woman-led movement, we also greatly welcome The Duchess's commitment to promoting the development of women into leadership."

All members, family and friends are invited to our

### COMMISSIONING SERVICE

St. Mary's Church, Ely

Saturday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2pm

Celebrant and Preacher

Rt Revd. Dr Dagmar Winter, Bishop of Huntingdon

Banners will be paraded.

Tea and Cake.

MUe cards on sale.

Having seen so many banners on display in the Cathedral last year it would be wonderful to see them again at our Commissioning Service for trustees and leaders.

## Lady Day at All Saints' Parish Church, St Ives

All Saints', St Ives will be hosting a Lady Day Service on Tuesday **25<sup>th</sup> of March** at 2.30pm. It will be in the form of a Communion Service followed by Afternoon Tea. If members of your branch would like to attend, please could you contact Deirdre Milner by email to [deejmilner@sky.com](mailto:deejmilner@sky.com).

## Lady Day Service Littleport

This year St George's Littleport are hosting the Lady Day service on Tuesday **March 25<sup>th</sup>** at 2.30. It will be a communion service led by our vicar, Natalie Andrews followed by light refreshments in the church hall. Please can branch secretaries send rough numbers of those attending to Julieanne Long [julianne@textileartist.co.uk](mailto:julianne@textileartist.co.uk)

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### FFF

Near the beginning of each month you receive the Families Faith and Fun pages written by Ros Wright. I know these are put in churches, sent to grandchildren and used by children's workers.

You will see here that Peter Smith, a children's worker from All Saint's Church St. Ives, used the St Nicholas Craft Activity from December with his children.

### Quiet Day

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April at  
Waterbeach**

**10am for 10.30 start/ 3pm finish**

**Ros Wright will be running the  
session**

.....  
**Advance Notice**

### Quiet Day

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September**

**Ely Diocesan M U**

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

**Ros 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)**

**Hazel 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)**

### Make a Mother's Day Appeal

#### **Celebrate Mothering Sunday with a Gift that Changes Lives**

Mothering Sunday is a time to reflect, remember, and celebrate the women who nurture and guide us. But for many families around the world, home is not always a place of peace.

In the Solomon Islands, over 85% of children experience violent discipline. Parents long for a better way—to create harmony, to teach love, and to build a future where their children can flourish. Through Mothers' Union's Worldwide Parenting Programme, we are making that hope a reality.

Sidonia, a mother and now a grandmother, saw her family transformed after attending a Mothers' Union parenting course:

*"Before, our home was filled with conflict. Now, we live in peace. My children have learned to share, and my husband has given up drinking. I thank God every day for this change."*

This Mothering Sunday, you can bring peace to more families by [purchasing an ethical Gift of Peace](#). Each gift helps parents gain the skills they need to create loving, stable homes for their children.



I was really inspired by the use of the **2025 Prayer Diary** in their meeting at Yaxley. We are going to follow it at our branch meeting in March, when we unexpectedly have a vacant slot. If you would also like to do this Irene has a more detailed plan which she has sent to me and I am happy to forward on if you get in touch. It might help us all to use the diary more regularly.

Hazel

## Yaxley Branch

Irene Porter



For our **February meeting**, Yaxley branch members all brought copies of the 2025 Prayer Diary. We looked at the focus of each month and the new features this year's diary contains. We all read the January monthly prayer and discussed the creative prayer activity. The February reflection starts with "May we bloom where we are planted" Everyone was given a small bag of cress seeds to encourage them to try the creative prayer. With Mothering Sunday in March, the "Make a Mothers' Day" appeal leaflet was hi-lighted. Following the first line of the monthly prayer for April "Lord, I light a candle as a symbol of love" candle holders and candles were given to everyone. It was suggested that the cress seeds, for February, could be sown in the holders. May, "Thy Kingdom Come" we sang "We seek your Kingdom" (To Abide with me), held up our hands for "pray for 5 and invite 1" just like the ladies in the picture.

Our clergy will feel supported if members do as the creative prayer for June suggests. At this point in the diaries several people found that the centre page is becoming loose, one had been lost completely, hopefully not an intended feature! One thing that is missing this year, is the map. Looking at the seaside donkeys for July, we thought about the AFIA holidays and sang "We're all going on a summer holiday" , after which we decided that we didn't sound much like Cliff Richards. We also thought about not everyone being able to go on a summer holiday. The creative prayer in August helps us think about our founder Mary Sumner, and enjoy eating sweets. The Power of Reconciliation for September, some had heard of "The Community of the Cross of Nails" We placed nails in the shape of the cross. October looks at those in prison and those who are persecuted. We thought about our links in Nigeria and India who are both high on the Opens Doors list of persecuted churches. November's picture of the shoes and the reflection will help to prepare for the "16 Days" later in the month. December, Invitations and gifts, everyone was invited to use their Prayer Diaries, daily, weekly or monthly and to fill in the prayer requests and "Things I'm Thankful For" on the last pages. We finished with our Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow's message on the back cover.

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**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on  
Zoom 10.30am on 20<sup>th</sup> March**

**Ros Wright**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BR LZDIK.1>

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628**

**Passcode: 080127**

**ADVANCE NOTICE - Spring Diocesan meeting and AGM  
will take place at St. Peter's Church, March on Saturday  
25<sup>th</sup> April at 9.30am for 10am.**

Nick Keen will also be talking about the work of MAF  
(Mission Aviation Fellowship).

If you have any picture postcards (either new or used)  
please bring them to the meeting or give to someone  
who is coming)

## COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye

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

“MU Working with People of All Faiths and None”. Led by Debbie Tye.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytyELsv-swc>

We lost the signal with the Cathedral during the zoom connection, meaning some of the recording had to be redone and edited, so apologies for any unexpected pauses in the video.

The next Thursday Prayer Service is on 20th March, and because of some planned work taking place in The Almonry, alternative arrangements for having coffee after the service may have to be made, which will be announced on the day.

*Also, if you coming to the Cathedral then, just to let you know there will be a Lunchtime Concert at 1.10pm, with a piano recital from Christopher Seed. Musicians from The King's School Ely will be performing on 13th March. More info here: <https://www.elycathedral.org/music/concerts-and-recitals/lunchtime-concerts>*

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Thank you for those who responded so quickly to the request for brightly coloured lap blankets, for a trial to reduce falls, at Hinchingbrooke Hospital.



### MU RESOURCES FOR LENT AND EASTER “LIVING HOPE”

The Mothers' Union Lent theme for 2025 is Living Hope. This theme invites us to reflect deeply on the hope we have in Christ, even as we walk through the challenges and complexities of life. During Lent, we are called to journey with Jesus along the difficult road that leads to the cross, a road marked by sacrifice, pain, and ultimately, redemption. It is a journey that resonates with the struggles we face in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

MU has produced a new Lent Calendar and there is a reflection, poem and prayers, as well as a Holy Week and Easter meditation.

As we focus on Living Hope this Lent, maybe choose one resource and journey with it. Lent isn't about doing everything; it's an opportunity to prepare for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday. A season to grow in hope and draw closer to God.

Follow this link for the resources: <https://www.mothersunion.org/news/welcome-lent>

The Church of England also has a lot of info on its website

here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/living-hope-resources-lent-2025>

## A REFLECTION

*Philip Baker (17<sup>th</sup> February 2025)*

Have you noticed how frequently the number 40 crops up in the Bible? Moses spent 40 days on the mountain being prepared to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 24:18), culminating in the second set of stones bearing what we refer to as the 10 Commandments (Exodus 34:28 – the first set of stones Moses destroyed, see Exodus 32:15-20); the earth was flooded for 40 days to rid the earth of creatures except those saved in the ark (Genesis 7:12), and there are many more. On Ash Wednesday (which falls this year on 5<sup>th</sup> March) we enter the 40 days of Lent, which many suggest recalls the 40 days Jesus spent being tempted in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11) and is a period of contemplation culminating in the deeply contrasting events and emotions of Easter.

Our 40 days ends in the ultimate glory of Easter, and traditionally we mark it by denying ourselves something, such as chocolate. I have a suggestion. The Bible is interesting and reading it helps us to understand our faith so, for a change from the usual, instead of chocolate, how about giving up a little time each day to think of God and read the Bible? There are lots of plans available on line, although I use a completely free app on my phone (YouVersion) which offers several plans to choose from, including reading the whole Bible in 365 days (that is what I do and it takes around 15 minutes a day). Alternatively, try to read the first 24 chapters from the book of Exodus (which includes the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai) and all 28 chapters of the Gospel of Matthew (which is the story of Jesus up to His Resurrection at the end of our 40 days of Lent). That should be an easy read in 40 days. taking about 15 minutes each day for a chapter from each. If that is not enough (or instead), for a lovely story of faith and love read Ruth, which is really short.

Whatever we do, let us make sure we remember God's amazing love for us as shown by the sacrifice He made on the Cross, followed by His example of rising to life again.

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## **Susan Baker Memorial Fund**

**Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union, through the Susan Baker Memorial Fund, support capital costs for work with families of all generations in the Ely Diocese.**

### **Ways we might support**

Work with families from children to the elderly.

Resources for groups: e.g. books, audio visuals, art and craft materials, equipment, start-up costs, courses, administration, venue hire.

**Maximum Grant available: £500.** No more than one grant per year. Capital costs only (not salaries)

**Application forms are available on the Mothers' Union section of the Diocese of Ely website:** <https://www.elydiocese.org/church-in-action/mothers-union/> (after 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025)  
**or by email from Mrs Jean Webb:** [jmw35n@gmail.com](mailto:jmw35n@gmail.com)

**Applications are invited for submission by the following dates with a decision to be notified after the subsequent Trustees meeting.**

31<sup>st</sup> January   30<sup>th</sup> April   31<sup>st</sup> July   31<sup>st</sup> October

**Completed application forms should be sent by email or post to:**

Mrs Jean Webb, Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union, 35 Norfolk Road, Ely. CB6 3EJ.



## Newsletter April 2025



### COMMISSIONING SERVICE FOR ELY DIOCESE

On March 22<sup>nd</sup> Mothers' Union members and friends gathered at St. Mary's Church in Ely for a Service of Thanksgiving and Commissioning for trustees, chaplain and officers, by Bishop Dagmar, Bishop of Huntingdon. They will be in post for the next three years.

Jean Webb, Hazel Williams MBE, Bishop Dagmar, Debbie Tye and Revd. Paula Spalding are shown on the first photograph. Jean, Hazel and Debbie will be working together as vice-presidents filling the role of president.

Below are photographs of banners that were paraded and the commissioning itself with trustees, life vice presidents and chaplain standing for their special part of the ceremony.

After the service there was an opportunity to catch up with members from other branches over tea and cake.



### Spring Diocesan meeting and AGM

**St. Peter's Church, March**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 9.30am for 10am.**

Nick Keen will also be talking about the work of MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship).

If you have any picture postcards (either new or used) please bring them to the meeting or give to someone who is coming) to give to MAF.

**SEE AGENDA AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER.**

Please bring your own lunch.



The MU Worldwide President Kathleen Snow, visited the Eastern Region at the beginning of April. She and her team visited HMP Five Wells in Wellingborough, with Peterborough MU Diocesan President, as their MU are involved closely with the prison. Members from Ely, Peterborough, Norwich and St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich and Dioceses then met with Kathleen and her team at the Ely Diocesan Office. After lunch, time was spent talking about MU issues before Kathleen gave an excellent talk and PowerPoint presentation.

Bishop Dagmar happened to be at a meeting in the Office, and was able to meet our MU visitors.

Above shows Jean Webb (Ely Vice-President), Bishop Dagmar, Julia Jamieson (Zonal Trustee for Canterbury Province), Kathleen Snow (Worldwide President), Comfort Idowu-Fearon (Canterbury Provincial President), Debbie Tye (Ely Vice-President).



Eastern Region MU members meeting together in Ely to share news and hear the latest initiatives taking place in the Mothers' Union.

#### Ely Diocesan M U contacts

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

Ros 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

#### Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom

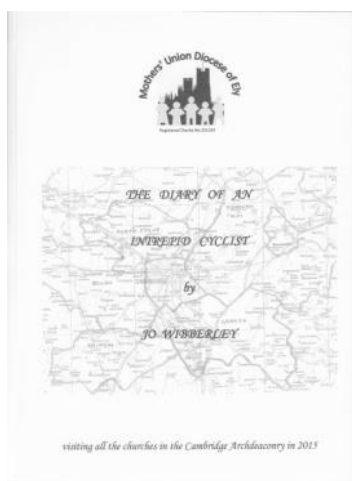
10.30am on 24<sup>th</sup>

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGQ12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127



## THE DIARY OF AN INTREPID CYCLIST



I finally got around to finishing this diary last summer with the incentive of having a copy available for the Banner Exhibition in the Cathedral. It is now nearly 10 years since I started this venture. The idea was to promote the Mothers' Union in the Cambridge archdeaconry, so over 7 months I cycled nearly 700 miles and visited 147 churches. I experienced most types of weather except snow and hurricane and doing without my husband's map reading skills was sometimes a bit of a challenge.

Having recently been asked for a copy from a MU member and now promoting it at my church, if anyone would like one, I can print to order. The cost is a donation to providing welcome bags of toiletries and underwear for new residents at Whitworth House. Although MU members are generous in providing some of the items needed, the usual spend is about £20 a bag and I deliver 6 bags two or three times a year. They are very gratefully received as some of the young women arrive with only the clothes they are wearing.



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### A REFLECTION

As you read this, we are coming to Easter and the shops are full of Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns. Our celebration is joyful. Do we think much about what the first Easter must have been like for those who witnessed it?

Easter ends the period of time we call Lent during which, by some small acts of sacrifice, we have been calling to mind Jesus' withdrawal into the desert for 40 days and nights to prepare for His ministry and to overcome temptation by the devil. Do we think what that means for us?

On Palm Sunday, we recall the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to live out the climax of His ministry. The people were jubilant – here was their Messiah – but Jesus must have known what was to happen. Do we wonder what must have been going through His mind?

Just a few days more, Good Friday, also known as Black Friday, Great Friday and Holy Friday, would bring Him to His death on the Cross. He did this for us. He did it to provide us a path to salvation and a life with God. Do we marvel at His generosity – giving His own life that we might live?

Finally, the glory of His resurrection on Easter Sunday. It is said that if there is one thing we as Christians can say to show our faith it is: "Christ is Risen – Indeed!" It is the defining moment for us when He shows himself to Mary Magdalene and entrusts her to tell His followers. Do we consider how that directly impacts our own path through death?

Last month I reflected upon possible acts of sacrifice to show our solidarity with our God and suggested giving up a little time for some light Bible reading. I don't know how many were able to follow my suggestions, but I closed last month saying "Whatever we do, let us make sure we remember God's amazing love for us as shown by the sacrifice He made on the Cross, followed by His example of rising to life again." That was true last month, just as true this month and will be true every month until we follow in Jesus' footsteps right to the end.

*Philip Baker (19<sup>th</sup> March 2025)*



Christian Hope International have moved to Brentwood. They have nowhere to store the sweaters, hats, gloves, blankets that many Mothers' Union members have donated for many years. So sadly, Stitches of Hope has ceased. Thank you to everyone who has donated but please do not stop knitting and crocheting. We still need the blankets as well as fiddle muffs, baby hats, canula sleeves etc.

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## 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations - reminder of key dates:

- 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026, a celebratory service at St Paul's at 7pm is the official 150<sup>th</sup> service for Mothers' Union
- 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 150<sup>th</sup> year Annual Gathering at the Emmanuel Centre, next to Mary Sumner House.

\*\*\*\*\*

## WORLDWIDE NEWS

**Clementine Dushimimana** is the new Mothers' Union worker for **Shyogwe Diocese in Rwanda** and this is her recent letter to Ely Diocese.

*Dear Irene Porter,*

*I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*I sincerely apologize for not being in touch earlier. Last year, I started my role as a Mothers' Union worker, and over the past months, I have been busy learning about Shyogwe Mothers' Union; how it operates, ways to improve it, and how to encourage greater participation from women.*

*Several important initiatives have taken place. We have mobilized and trained the Mothers' Union committee at the parish, archdeaconry, and diocesan levels, encouraging and empowering members in their responsibilities. We have also been preparing for a couples' gathering and conference, aimed at fostering unity and strengthening families within the church community. Additionally, we are encouraging creativity among women and youth through an art and design project, as well as a sewing project, both of which will expand further this year.*

*I have attached a summary of last year's activities, which I hope will give you a clearer picture of the work being done in the Shyogwe Diocese Mother's Union. (This will be in our May newsletter)*

*I was so delighted to receive the Christmas card you sent me; thank you so much for thinking of me. I hope you also had a blessed Christmas, and I am praying for a healthy, happy, and blessed year for you and all. I was also truly blessed to read the January 2025 newsletter and was inspired by all that God has done through you and His servants. I am especially grateful for your prayers for Rwanda and other countries, and for mentioning MU leaders in your prayers. May God bless you abundantly!*

*I have learned so much from the wonderful way you share Mothers' Union news, and I pray that God enables us to continue sharing and communicating the amazing work He is doing in MU this year as well. We will continue to pray for all prayer requests you send us, and please pass our warm greetings to our brothers and sisters in Christ.*

*With love and prayers,*

*Clementine*

**SPRING DIOCESAN MEETING and AGM**  
**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April at St. Peter's Church Hall. March. 9.30am -2pm**  
**9.30am Coffee for a 10am Start**

***Please do not go into the church. The meeting is in the hall at the side of the church (follow the signs)  
where there will also be MU displays and cards.***

**Agenda**

**10am Welcome and Opening Prayer**

<b>AGM</b>	Apologies
	Approval of Minutes
	Annual Report.
	Annual Accounts
	Appointment of Auditor

**10.40am**

**SPRING MEETING**

Minutes of Autumn meeting 2023

Matters Arising

Comfort Break and opportunity to see displays and cards

**11.00am SPEAKER** - Nick Keen will be talking about the work of **MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship)**.  
Questions.

**11.45am UNIT UPDATES**

Visit of Worldwide President

**12noon**

Midday Prayers

Praying our Faith

Faith in Action

Communications

Finance and Admin

**12.45pm** Lunch *Please bring your own lunch. Drinks will be supplied.*

**1.45pm** Finish

**Everyone welcome.**

**A copy of the annual report has been sent with this agenda and the annual accounts will be circulated separately but before the meeting. Please bring a copy with you as we are not intending to print copies for all attendees at the meeting.**

# Newsletter May 2025

Clementine Dushimimana is the new Mothers' Union worker for **Shyogwe Diocese in Rwanda**. She sends warm greetings to you all and a report of their activities for the last year. You will have read her letter in the April Issue. Over the next few issues of the newsletter there will be more information about their achievements.

## REPORT FROM SHYOGWE

Mary Samuna Day is celebrated alongside the increasing membership of the Mothers' and Fathers' unions in various parishes. Mothers' Union, Fathers' Union, have been formed at the diocesan, archdeaconry, and parish levels.



Seminar for married couples focused on domestic violence prevention.





## A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (24<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

Easter is now in our rear-view mirror; we have been through the extreme range of emotions from the agony of the crucifixion to the ecstasy of the resurrection, but is it in fact now over? Of course it isn't, rather it is the start!

The original Apostles had to come to terms with the events of that first Easter. Understandably they took time to realise the enormity of what they had just been part of and lived through, Jesus had died on the Cross and risen again to life, in fulfilment of the Scriptures and to give mankind the opportunity of turning to God and having heavenly life after earthly death. I cannot imagine the effort that understanding this must have taken. And then the realisation of what this meant for them. This is where we are in that process – coming to terms with the implications of what it means to be a follower of Christ. At Baptism services there is this question: “Do you renounce evil and turn to Christ?” – that is what we have to ask ourselves now.

Fifty days after Easter we come to Pentecost, which is when the Apostles and their followers were gathered together and the Spirit of the Lord came down and filled them. This gave them the strength to go out and preach the gospels to everyone who would listen. In a sense it marked the beginning of the church, when it grew from a band of followers to a movement. Those Apostles have long ago joined with God, and others have taken up their work. This process of passing the job on to successive generations has been going on ever since then, and we are in a direct line of descent from that time. It is now our turn and when we have done what we can those we have enthused will continue it on.

This Easter season let us reflect on that continuum and rejoice in our part in it. Let us be filled by the Holy Spirit and be enthused to do our part for the growth of our Faith. Let us see ourselves as part of God's earthly Kingdom that has been at work for the past two thousand years.

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### **MOTHERS' UNION GARDEN PARTY**

**Bishop's Garden, Ely. Saturday 14th 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**

### **150<sup>th</sup> celebration.**

Put your thinking hats on and think of what we can do to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mothers' Union. Ideas for things to do as a diocese as well as within branches and deaneries. It seems like a long way away but celebrations need to be taking place by the end of summer 2026. Contact me at the details below so that we can get the ball rolling. *Hazel*

Ely Diocesan M U contacts

Ros 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

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

Hazel 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

Diocesan minutes from our Spring meeting and AGM will be sent out with the Newsletter but I have included below notes from the excellent illustrated talk from MAF by Nick Keen. If you, friends or church members have any picture postcards (either new or used) please pass to Jean Webb. They will be given to MAF for their fundraising.



Nick explained that **Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)** is a Christian airline mission – the largest humanitarian airline in the world. It has been running for 80 years having started just after the war with the purpose “to fly for life” to isolated (both spiritually and physically) places, preaching and saving. There is the Christian Vet Mission in Africa, also evangelising. He spoke of flying a pastor across Madagascar to minister in a prison. Aircraft are flying every 6 minutes to build communities, bring the gospel, and support the local church by bringing the love of Jesus. They are reaching the most isolated people in the most remote corners of the world. They work in many countries, some of which cannot be named due to security risks. They have flown representatives from 1500 charities, responding to disasters, bringing medicines and supporting community development and training.

There are 1350 people working for MAF throughout the world, as pilots, booking agents, radio operators, mechanical and electrical engineers. Only 2% of workers actually fly, the rest are important to keep it operating. The light aircraft carry 4- 13 people depending on size of plane and operate to the same standards as any aircraft. They have to be used to rough runways. There are 1,000 destinations in 24 countries transporting 125,000 passengers around the world, travelling 6.1 million km. Roads in many places are impassable in the wet season and so MAF enables people to get on with their work. They are able to fly people in quickly to deal with medical situations, and in some places medical staff give up a week’s holiday to run eye clinics in remote areas. 295 eye surgeries were performed in a 5-day clinic in Kenya. Pilots are not medics but may often get involved with administration. Children are flown to and from school at the beginning and end of term. In supporting development work, an agronomist may be flown in to an area to teach better crop growing. Surplus crops are taken by plane to be sold elsewhere. When building schools in remote areas all materials have to be flown in. 3.1 million people have been displaced by the war in Sudan. MAF has flown in cargo and medicines, on 33 flights, 200 passengers and 26 tons of cargo to transit camps for refugees. Bible translators are also carried. In Angola, the Halo Trust has removed 100,000 of the 10 million landmines and MAF rescued 1,000 refugees after terror attacks in Mozambique. MAF works with cut off communities in jungles, mountains, deserts, swamps as well as conflict and disaster zones. It overcomes formidable barriers for those trapped in isolation and poverty. Communications are improving with mobile phones. On return engineers have to clean the dust out of engines. Aircraft are used for ambulance work, tool boxes, school transport, food delivery and disaster relief. He asked members to pray for MAF, volunteer or donate either by legacies or collecting postcards which can be sold to raise money. It costs £60 - £70 million to run the charity. They do not charge for services but ask for a contribution later. They bring help, hope and healing to communities. Pilots give a percentage of their income to support the work and are all Christians, praying before take-off. MAF is working with younger people in order to recruit volunteers.

## ANNUAL MEETING and DISPLAYS for FAITH IN ACTION and WORLDWIDE



### COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye

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

“Celebrating the Light of the World”. Led by Philip Baker.

As we lost our zoom connection in the Cathedral, we have produced this video slightly differently.

Sue Claydon was able to record the prayers and reading from her link. We recorded Philip’s talk separately in the Cathedral – then joined it together! You may find that you will have to turn up the volume a bit during Philip’s talk – then turn it down for the song.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zl-qwofrOsg>

### **BANNER HOLDER.**

We think this Banner Holder was left behind at our Commissioning Service.

Does anyone recognise it? If so, please get in contact with Debbie to arrange collection: [MUElyDiocese@hotmail.com](mailto:MUElyDiocese@hotmail.com)



**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am on  
15<sup>th</sup> May**

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

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127**





Jean delivering knitted items to Alison at Hinchingsbrooke

When I recently took a batch of lovely knitting to Hinchingsbrooke, I met Alison who works on the dementia ward. I heard that the brightly coloured lap blankets, which were requested for a trial to prevent falls, have also been very popular in helping patients recognise their bed by the blanket draped over it.

So please keep knitting bright colours, and different patterns and designs.

Just a reminder that fluffy yarns are not suitable, but odd squares of soft texture yarn that won't pull out certainly are.

Many thanks for keeping me busy sewing MU name tapes on them! *Jean Webb*



### **THY KINGDOM COME: 29th May – 8th June.**

This year, Thy Kingdom Come celebrates its tenth anniversary. For ten years we have been praying Thy Kingdom Come. In particular, each year, we have been praying for five people we know, that they may come to know the love of God for themselves. Once again, Mothers' Union are asking members to 'Pray for Five, Invite One.' So as well as an encouragement to pray, we are using this as an opportunity to invite one individual each to a Mothers' Union event.

This call echoes our triennium theme of "Join Us, Join In!" This year, as we continue in this pilgrimage of prayer, we focus on the prayer that Jesus taught us: the prayer that teaches us how to pray and live, the prayer that contains this amazing hope, Thy Kingdom Come!  
<https://www.mothersunion.org/ThyKingdomCome>

More MU Resources are also available here:

<https://www.mothersunion.org/news/heres-how-you-can-get-involved-with-thy-kingdom-come>

This includes an Interactive Prayer Station leaflet and other ideas. The theme for May Midday Prayer will focus on "Thy Kingdom Come".

There's more info on the Thy Kingdom Come website: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

Particularly useful is the Novena Booklet and Prayer Journal, this year focussing on The Lord's Prayer, with 10 days of reflections, written by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Thursday Lunchtime Concerts, Ely Cathedral at 1.10pm.**

If you are coming to any of our Thursday Prayer Services, there are some Lunchtime Concerts this term which coincide with our dates:

19 June - Jane Faulkner (violin) and 17 July - Julian Hellaby (piano)

The Concert Series runs from 22 May to 24 July, and a full list can be found on the Cathedral website:  
<https://www.elycathedral.org/music/concerts-and-recitals/lunchtime-concerts>

## Threads through the Bible Exhibition, Ely Cathedral.

Running from Friday 9 May - Sunday 29 June.

“Threads through the Bible” is an astonishing, inspiring exhibition of textile art. With spectacular designs, brilliant colours and extraordinary stitching, you’re taken through a journey from the first pages to the last pages of the Bible. Artist Jacqui Parkinson has been fascinated by the Bible and its stories for fifty years.

She says: “My aim is to capture the wonderful extravagance and drama of three key parts of the Bible – creation, the life of Jesus, and the end times – and to delight people who view it. It’s a story of love and promise, tragedy and triumph, and ultimate hope that we can all do with these days.”

If you saw any of the other exhibitions in this series, this will be well worth a visit if you are coming to Ely.

Full details available here: <https://www.elycathedral.org/events/threads-through-the-bible-exhibition>

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Saturday 27th September 2025. **Canterbury Provincial Gathering** is at The King’s Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES. **Tickets** £20 per person and are available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union)

Join Us, Join In is the theme. The event is open to all members and your friends too.

### AGENDA

10am Venue open, tea & coffee provided

10.30am Gathering opens with Welcome and Worship

#### Morning includes:

Introduction by PP Comfort Fearon

Presentations by 2 Clusters

Dorcas Dress Project

12 Midday Service with Communion led by

The Rt Revd Stephen Croft, Bishop of Oxford

1 – 2.30pm LUNCH (please bring your own)

Tea & Coffee provided

#### 2.30pm Afternoon includes:

Words from WWP Kathleen Snow

Parababble Puppet Ministry

Presentations by 2 Clusters

MU Across the World by

The Rt Revd Dr Jo Bailey Wells,

Bishop of Episcopal Ministry

4.30/4.45pm Close with prayers and the Grace

5 - 5.30pm End of our day

#### 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations - reminder of key dates:

- 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026, a celebratory service at St Paul’s at 7pm is the official 150<sup>th</sup> service for Mothers’ Union
- 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 150<sup>th</sup> year Annual Gathering at the Emmanuel Centre, next to Mary Sumner House.
- **Early October 2026** for the Mothers’ Union **150th Anniversary Global Gathering in Durban, South Africa**. Learn, inspire, and connect with members worldwide. Shape the future of Mothers’ Union with fresh insights and be part of something truly transformational. Ticket price for Gathering only £95. **ESTIMATED** costs including Return Flights, Accommodation (5 nights), Airport Transfers, Breakfast and Evening Meals **£1,500 - £1,700 per person**. Please contact Hazel if you are interested.

## Newsletter June 2025



### Canterbury Provincial Conference

Can you spot Debbie, Jean and Hazel in this gathering of Diocesan Presidents, in May, at High Gate House in Northants. It gave us an opportunity to meet other DPs from across the Canterbury Province and hear speakers from Mary Sumner House and Julia Jamieson our Zonal trustee.



Prayers were led by Josiah Fearon, husband of Comfort our new Provincial President, leading her first provincial conference. Meeting in our Eastern Region Cluster Group gave us time to share any future plans and projects. Plans for the 150th anniversary festivities in 2026 are foremost in people's minds, as planning needs to start this year.

*Hazel*

### **MOTHERS' UNION GARDEN PARTY**

**Bishop's Garden, Ely. Saturday 14th 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**

*There is no entry to the Bishop's Garden from the gallery. Entry to the Bishop's Garden will only be through the rose garden from the back gate of the palace. This gate is along the road which runs from the **South** Door of the cathedral to the portico which you drive under to exit into the end of the Gallery.*

*The scaffolding will help guide you! Parking only in public car parks.*



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

“A New Commandment”. Led by Gail Swanson.

As we weren't able to record from the Cathedral, Sue sent us a video from the zoom recording, which has been edited, and we've added in Gail's recording of her reflection. Hope you enjoy this final version.

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

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### Thanksgiving service for Littleport MU member Mavis Blackmore

*Julianne Long*

A service of thanksgiving and celebration of the life of Mavis Blackmore was held at St George's church, Littleport on 14th May.

Mavis was a long-time member of the Mother's Union and had at one time been branch leader for eight years.

She and her husband David had travelled to The Gambia and while there she visited a Mother's Union group. She bought out there a lovely kaftan made of fabric printed with the MU logo. On her return home she organised collections of books to send to a school in The Gambia.

The materials for our Mother's Union banner were paid for by Mavis and the banner used during the opening of the service as at her family's request, St George's MU formed a Guard of Honour outside of the church to welcome people in. The refreshments afterwards were provided by the Mother's Union which we all felt a fitting tribute to our good and loyal friend Mavis.

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### 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations - reminder of key dates:

- **10<sup>th</sup> June 2026**, a celebratory service at St Paul's at 7pm is the official 150<sup>th</sup> service for Mothers' Union
- **11<sup>th</sup> June 2026**, 150<sup>th</sup> year Annual Gathering at the Emmanuel Centre, next to Mary Sumner House.
- **Early October 2026** for the Mothers' Union **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Global Gathering in Durban, South Africa**. Please contact Hazel if you are interested.

## AFIA

Good morning Jean,

*Thank you for your email. Thank you for continuing supporting families who really benefit from holidays provided by Mother's Union. It makes a real difference to families to spend positive time together away from everyday stress and pressures.*

*Thank you for your good wishes. At least the spring is here now.*

Kind regards,

Irena

20 colourful blankets ready to go to Hinchingbrooke Hospital for the dementia patients. I'm sure these bright colours will be most appreciated.



A reminder to branches that if you are inviting friends, family, congregation etc. to events this summer, a risk assessment should be completed beforehand and visitors made aware of any risk areas?

Risk Assessment template available from me.

*Jean (jmw35n@gmail.com)*

## Anglian Peace and Justice Network Prayers

The Anglican Peace and Justice Network serves the whole of the Anglican Communion, and welcomes anyone to prayers for peace, justice and reconciliation.

In each prayer session there is a focus on some part of the world, and in this one will hear about issues in **Pakistan/India and Melanesia**. I am sending this to you all this time, as Fr. Reginald from the Solomon Islands has recorded his reflection on the issues of peace there. One of them is domestic violence and he talks about the work the Church is doing with the Mothers Union, especially with men. Domestic violence is a big issue there.

There are two sessions and both have been scheduled for times that bring in the widest geographic spread of time zones. For us here in the UK they are a bit 'odd' but doable if you can. Please share this with anyone you think might be interested. You do have to register. The registration links are:

**Jun 10, 2025 08:00 AM London** <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/EQ6ptfU8QliYJ-U0MwHU9Q>

**Jun 11, 2025 06:00 PM London** [https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/-cbZi4G\\_RguKaY4-uw8Gbg](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/-cbZi4G_RguKaY4-uw8Gbg)

In His peace, Sue Claydon

## A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (18<sup>th</sup> May 2025)

Change, so much change! A new leader of the Roman Catholic Church, a new President of the USA, a strong negative reaction to current political parties in the UK and a new Worldwide President of the Mothers' Union. It feels as though we are caught up in a maelstrom of change over which, as individuals, we have little say. I have picked on just four examples, which show how all aspects of our existence are affected by such events. However, we are naturally inclined to view these matters in very different ways.

We have all formed our views on matters of politics. We see the goings on in the USA with some detachment, knowing we will be affected but peripherally. However, we see UK politics very differently, feeling deeply involved in the issues at stake. Yet this does not reflect the global impact of each, with the USA potentially influencing far more people around the world than anything we do in the UK. Matters of religion on the other hand are based on immutable truths, any change here is relatively superficial and unlikely to have any serious impact on us.

So, our reactions are related to how much we ourselves are personally affected. Where does that leave the new Pope and our MU President?

The Pope arguably has the power to have the greatest impact on the people of the whole world of all these examples but, until we consider it, how many of us immediately felt that? By working mainly with the vulnerable and most marginalised people around the world, the MU has enormous influence to do good. Both of these operate in God's name, is that a co-incidence? I think not, and that it shows when you go behind the sensationalist headlines you find God working, as He has done for millennia, to support those who need help, love, compassion. We have nothing to fear from these changes, so feel safe and less involved.

It gives me a great sense of hope that, throughout all the change we hear so much about, God has not changed at all and is continuing to work through us, his followers and servants, just as He always has done. Alleluia!

\*\*\*\*\*

Advance notice: **Quiet Day** Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September at Etheldreda House (new diocesan office), Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely CB6 3NX. Led by Rosey Feuall from Cherry Hinton.

Advance notice: Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2025. **Canterbury Provincial Gathering** is at The King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES. **Tickets** £20 per person and are available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union)

Join Us, Join In is the theme. The event is open to all members and your friends too.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am on 19<sup>th</sup> June**

**Presented by Jean Webb**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrCiGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127**

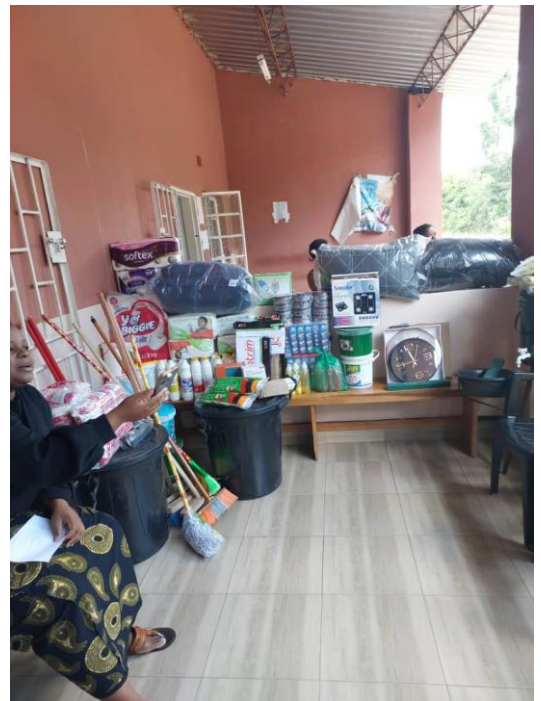
**Ely Diocesan M U contacts**

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

**Ros 01223 861846** [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

**Hazel 01638 743897** [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)





## Worldwide News

The **Diocese of Lusaka, in Zambia**, built a Rural Health Centre a few years ago. Each year Mothers' Union delivers donated items to the health centre, which is the only material clinic in an area of around 15 kilometers from the only hospital in the district. In the photos are the Mothers' Union members and the amazing number of items that they delivered.

*Irene Porter*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Respond**  
**Inform**  
**Support**  
**Empower**

**Unite**  
**Pray**



## RISE UP awards

Later this month, awards will be presented to branches and churches who are actively championing the [RISE UP against domestic abuse campaign](#).

These awards recognise groups that are raising awareness and supporting local domestic abuse organisations through meaningful action. There are three award levels and 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.

Almost every branch already fulfils section 3 because many contribute to helping the refugees, with whom we have close contacts, through diocesan or branch collections of goods or shop vouchers. Brampton MU Branch is the first in the Ely Diocese to be awarded a Bronze RISE UP certificate and we hope many more will follow. Information is on the Mothers' Union website and get in touch with Hazel for forms to fill in as web-site ones are not working.



# Newsletter

## July & August 2025



### Leadership Conference at Liverpool Hope University



Jean and Hazel were delighted to attend the Britain & Ireland Leadership Conference 2025. It was hosted by our WWP, Kathleen Snow, the B&I Group (WW Trustees and Provincial Presidents) and the central charity staff team. The theme was **Stronger Together**, and **we explored membership growth, our 150<sup>th</sup> activities and celebrations as well as Strategic Planning**. Spot Jean and Hazel in the photo – we are there!

The focus of the conference was on how crucial it is that we build resources and tools to accelerate growth, and how the promotion of MU in 2026 will give us the unique opportunity to shine a light on MU for future generations and secure our future and that of the wider movement.

It was hard work in blistering heat, but with challenge brings opportunity, and everyone left committed to the production of a Diocesan 5 Year Plan that focuses on growth, succession planning, improving communications and a focus on reaching out to new audiences, to the clergy and the wider community.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that we are here in 150 years, and together as members, as dioceses, as a staff team and an elected board, we committed to the future of this wonderful movement.







This article and picture was submitted by Joanna Sanders who continues to be in touch with the church there. She says *'Many people fled to Port Sudan as it was originally a fairly safe haven but now drones are falling there'*.

## Sudan Church Review

Bishop Abdu and the Diocese of Port Sudan have been wonderfully hospitable opening up the diocesan compound in Port Sudan and people's homes to take in those who have been displaced from elsewhere. The women of the Mothers' Union openly shared their experience both as those displaced and those welcoming the displaced. In the church they are all one fellowship together within the Body of Christ although it is not always easy for either group to adapt to the needs of the other.

We sense this to be a time for opportunity for the church to grow and develop in new ways. Faith continues to inspire and sustain people amidst untold challenges.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Brampton branch** were delighted to welcome Jean Webb to their afternoon garden party to present their RISE UP Bronze Level Award. They achieved the award from their activities in 2024. They put up a RISE UP poster in their meeting place, dedicated one of their meetings to the RISE UP campaign with a service of prayers and reading. They invited guests to the service including the CEO of Peterborough Women's Refuge and Women's Aid representative and Managers of Hunts and Fenland Women's Refuge. They all attended. They then gifted 10 bags of "moving in" items such as body wash, soap, tooth brush, tooth paste, hair brush, sanitary pads, pack of tissues, hand cream shower puff, flannel, pair of bed socks, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant and hair bobbles. Some items were donated, otherwise they purchased the items from money donations collected at their meetings. Following the request from the managers, they also purchased new pillows, sheets and pillowcases to donate to the refuges. Also in 2024, as previous years, they bought chocolates and flowers for the mothers in the refuges on Mothering Sunday.

**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on  
Zoom 10.30am on 17<sup>th</sup> July & 21<sup>st</sup> August**  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>  
**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127**



## A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (16<sup>th</sup> June 2025)

The final verse of Isaiah 57 is possibly one of the most frequently stated in everyday conversation: “There is no peace for the wicked” (NIV). We all say it, often with humorous intent, but how often do we really think about what we are saying? The Good News Bible puts it slightly differently: “There is no safety for sinners”. That makes more sense now, doesn’t it. Isaiah 57 is all about good and evil and punishment, hence the final verse above. I love the Book of Isaiah because it speaks plainly (albeit in old-fashioned terms) and 57 explains why only those who turn to the ways of our Lord will be saved; only those who humbly do God’s work will receive His help.

It opens with a word of cheer for those who walk uprightly – “they find rest as they lie in death” (Isaiah 57:3). But how do we walk “uprightly”? This is explained in the following chapter, Isaiah 58:10-11 – “. . . if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs . . .” This seems to me to be another echo of John’s Gospel, 13:34 “A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another”. I have searched dozens of translations and they all say the same thing. Does this not seem to be the very essence of the Mothers’ Union? Giving ourselves into the service of those less fortunate, to help them out of their misery and into a better place; to love them as God loves us, as precious people deserving of love.

We are starting to consider how to celebrate 150 years of the Mothers’ Union next year. I find it hugely comforting that the movement started by Mary Sumner and followed passionately by thousands of people around the world ever since, is so deeply rooted in scripture, and that we can see the very direct connection between what we try to achieve and the way of life determined by God as leading to salvation and peace.

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### YAXLEY

St Peters, Yaxley, held a 24 hour prayer event in June. There were many stations with prayer resources for those attending to use. Yaxley Mothers' Union provided one which focused on the 'Rise Up' campaign, along with several Mothers' Union prayer books. *Irene*



#### Ely Diocesan M U contacts

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

Ros 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

**RISE UP** Please get in touch with Hazel if you fulfil the three requirements needed to apply for a Bronze Award. See June's newsletter or the MU website.

#### Dates for your Diary

**Quiet Day Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September at 10am**  
Etheldreda House (new diocesan office), Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely CB6 3NX. Led by Rosey Feuall from Cherry Hinton.

**Autumn Diocesan Meeting Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October**  
at St. Johns Church, Waterbeach. 9.30am – 2pm.  
Speaker – Julia Jameson. MU Zonal Trustee.

**Balsham Branch**, although few in number, enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon on Tuesday 17 June in the garden of Peter and Judy Neale where we have had many Garden Meetings. We had an interesting talk from a local resident on Her Garden Journey.

She has done a RHS course and plenty of practical gardening and has her own garden and an allotment. She has an area for cut flowers and came with a bucketful for members to share. Our hosts had prepared a Garden Quiz for us which was quite hard!

Two of our older members tied for first place. We then had a good tea and lots of chat sitting outside.



Joint quiz winners Ailsa and Lorna, Joanna Sanders, branch leader and secretary, and hosts Judy and Peter Neale.

\*\*\*\*\*

**St Neots MU Branch** held their annual garden party recently. In the past this has been held in the garden of one of our members but this year due to illness it was held in the Church Rooms and churchyard. This attracted a few passing folks who came to join us as well as members and friends. On the day we raised £245.45 for AFIA (with a few more donations since) and the tombola raised £100 for branch funds.





## COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye

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

“Putting on Christ”. Led by Jean Webb.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D19hInPeRw>

### THURSDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERT

If you are coming to Ely Cathedral for Thursday Prayer on 17th July, there is a Lunchtime Concert being held at 1.10pm, with a Piano Recital given by Julian Hellaby.

<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/lunchtime-concert-julian-hellaby-piano>

## Summer Garden Party in the Bishop's Garden



We held our annual celebration on a hot Saturday afternoon in June. Verinica Woodcock-Ellard, a very active and committed member for over 43 years received a Long Service Certificate. She is standing down as Branch Leader of Farcet after 25 years and Esther Charlton will be replacing her as new branch leader.



Donations and the raffle raised £144 which reflected the drop in attendance. Above is a very informative display showing the work taking place in some of our link diocese, put together by Irene Porter.

\*\*\*\*\*

Seven families have so far been booked this year for **AFIA** holidays at Hunstanton. Two have already been and the rest are going during the summer holidays. They are so excited that they and their children are able to get away, often for their first holiday ever.

### Summer of Hope

In war-torn regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo, mothers and families are being forced to flee violence. In fear for their lives, they often leave everything familiar behind - except for their children and a handful of seeds. **These seeds aren't just for survival. They're a symbol of faith, a sign that hope can still grow, even in the harshest conditions.** This summer, we invite you to take part in our [Summer of Hope appeal](#) - a season of giving, praying, planting and fundraising to support women, who are rebuilding their lives through literacy, faith, and community.





**Burwell Branch** held their June gathering at Burwell Museum. A wonderful place to visit either independantly or with a group. Many of the items on display bring back memories of my youth and there are items for every interest including room displays, the forge, WW 1 & 11 memorabilia, trains, carriages and a telephone switchboard complete with telephones that you need to dial (not press buttons). We finished off the afternoon with tea and cake and of course lots of chatter.

*Hazel Williams*

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Advance notice: Saturday 27th September 2025. **Canterbury Provincial Gathering** is at The King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES. **Tickets** £20 per person and are available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union)

Join Us, Join In is the theme. The event is open to all members and your friends too.

If you are attending please let Hazel know then we can put you in contact with others from our diocese.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Have you skills using a database?

**Mary Sumner House has a new database which means that we need to check what has been transferred over from the old one. We know some of the old information is inaccurate.**

**We are looking, ideally for a volunteer, who is familiar with using a database who could help the Ely Diocese Trustees check old information against new lists and input information from new members. This will be up to 450 members.**

**There is training available on the new database but you would need to already be familiar with the role and skills needed. A new laptop will be provided purely for MU data use.**

**Please get in touch with Hazel Williams on [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com) if you are interested.**

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## NOTICE FOR BRANCH LEADERS AND SECRETARIES

With reference to the above. Please send your up to date list of members for 2025 to Hazel (see above) so we can cross check that the correct information is being entered. Ros had so many problems with the old database that we want to make sure the new one is correct from the start.

If members have contact via e-mail it would help the diocese to have that information (no spam), and if they are happy to include their date of birth we can make sure 90<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> birthday cards are sent!!



# Newsletter

## September

### 2025



Paula Spalding, MU Chaplain for Ely Diocese, and Philip Baker, branch leader, with Rosemary Duckitt who was enrolled at Burwell branch meeting in July. A warm welcome to our new member.

*Hazel Williams Burwell Branch*



Our teas took place on the 5th, 6th and 7th of August in aid of AFIA and the Summer of Hope. We raised more than £1, 040 and there was much laughter and fellowship.

Having done this for several years I plan to repeat it again next year and it would be lovely to welcome members from other branches.

*Deirdre Milner St Ives Branch*

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**Quiet Day Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September at 10am** Etheldreda House (new diocesan office), Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely CB6 3NX. Led by Rosey Feuall from Cherry Hinton. Please bring a bible. Everyone welcome.

**Autumn Diocesan Meeting Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October** at St. Johns Church, Waterbeach. 9.30am – 2pm. Speaker – Julia Jameson. MU Zonal Trustee.



## A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025)

This month I start with a verse from John's gospel, 20:21, which reads: Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." It goes on to refer to spreading the Holy Spirit, but the essence of the message surely is in the verse quoted above. As disciples of Jesus, whom we all follow as He is the Way to Heaven, that is our charge, the mission with which we are all entrusted. Jesus went out to meet people where they are, to teach them the Word and to support and help them in their daily travails. This is what we do in the Mothers' Union; we have a job to do – to be active disciples of Jesus carrying on the work he started among the peoples of the world.

A rather overlooked book of the Old Testament, the Prophecy of Obadiah, has something to say about this. Little is known about Obadiah and his book is just one chapter long, but he writes about the Edomites, who were related to the Israelites through Esau, the brother of Jacob. Now God chose Jacob and when the Israelites were being over-run (by either the Philistines or the Babylonians, it is unknown which), the Edomites stood by and watched from the safety of their mountain hide-outs. Even though they could have helped their relatives, they didn't. Obadiah's prophecy concerned a vision in which God promised retribution on them for their inaction. The moral of this book is that to stand by when evil is being committed and not use whatever means is at hand to prevent it, is to be part of the crime. You cannot escape God's judgement!

This relates to the verse from John – it starts with an expression of God's Peace and continues with an exhortation to act as Jesus would, and there are plenty of examples of Jesus intervening in situations where people need help. Thus the focus of our work as members of the Mothers' Union is clear – not to stand by when we see evil being done; to spread the message of Peace that Jesus preached and to act as Jesus would. Reading stories of the work being done makes me think we are trying to do exactly that, Hallelujah!

It is with sadness that I report that our dear friend **Angela Jones** died on 5<sup>th</sup> August at the Arthur Rank Hospice. We will forever remember such a gracious, loving and gentle lady whose active kindness and leadership enhanced so many lives of all age. I'm sure we will all treasure our memories of her and are so grateful that she can now rest forever in the safety of God's peaceful presence. *Sarah Mascall*



It was wonderful to see so many people at Angela's funeral, many of them Mothers' Union members. She had been an active member for 20 years before coming to live in Ely, where she was one of the founding members of the MU Cathedral Branch. She was very involved in Edward Bear Toddler Group and work with families. For several years, she was also a valued member of our Communications Unit Committee, and used to look after the MU Noticeboard in the Cathedral, as well as being a link with the Cathedral in general.

Her funeral was very moving with an excellent rendering of Pie Jesu by Tara and Megan Bungard.

Our thoughts are with her family at this time. May Angela rest in peace and rise in glory.



## COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS. Debbie Tye

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

**JULY THURSDAY PRAYER: “Continuing in Faith” – Led by Maureen Haigh.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXZnZZksO8g>

**AUGUST THURSDAY PRAYER: Mothers’ Union - Working in Christ – Led by Irene Porter.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4N2XaQJ3kQ>

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## Thursday Lunchtime Concerts, Ely Cathedral at 1.10pm.

If you are coming to any of our Thursday Prayer Services, there are some Lunchtime Concerts this term which coincide with our dates:

18 September – Ben Norris (piano).

16 October – Ely Chamber Ensemble.

The current Concert Series is running from 18 September to 6 November, and a full list can be found on the Cathedral website: <https://www.elycathedral.org/music/concerts-and-recitals/lunchtime-concerts>

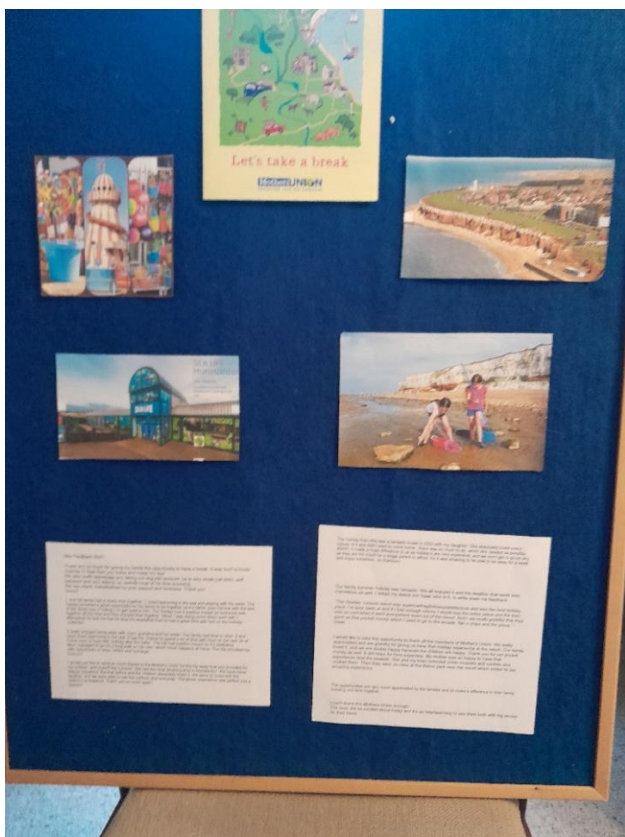
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## St Mary’s Ely MU Branch – Afternoon Tea Party.



St Mary’s Ely Branch held a very enjoyable **Afternoon Tea Party** in July which raised £165 from the event, and was increased to £200 with an additional amount from Branch funds, to be donated to AFIA. Another £200 was also sent to 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.



In August, **Yaxley MU** held a coffee morning to raise funds for AFIA. There were seaside themed activities. "Beach" volleyball up the aisle, our Vicar thought this should be a regular feature, seaside jigsaw to complete, holiday wordsearch, a sandpit, lots of cake and pictures of Hunstanton with comments from some of the families. We raised £222 for AFIA. Irene

### WORLDWIDE NEWS

We often have photos of Mothers' Union members in our link diocese in Zambia, Rwanda and Nigeria, wearing their blue and white uniforms. I thought you might like to see the members from Ghana in their colourful outfits. Ghana isn't one of our links, but is just to the left of Nigeria, in west Africa. They are celebrating Mary Sumner day. *Irene Porter, Worldwide Links*



**Saturday 27th September 2025.**  
**Canterbury Provincial Gathering** is at The King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES. **Tickets** £20 per person and are available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union)  
 Join Us, Join In is the theme. The event is open to all members and your friends too and it is not too late to buy a ticket.



**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and  
on Zoom 10.30am on 18<sup>th</sup> September**

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

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode  
080127**

**150<sup>th</sup> Fundraising Challenge**

The official countdown to the launch of the 150-Year Fundraising Challenge has begun! We are offering each diocese £150 in seed funding and challenging them to turn it into £1,500 or more by 31 December 2026.

It is time to get creative... from bake sales to bike rides, coffee mornings to concerts, supper clubs to sponsored prayer walks, your challenge, your way!

**Database Information**

Hazel asked, through the July newsletter, that branches send her their most recent up to date information and has already received eleven branches with more on their way. These have been sent on to Stuart. If you have not sent your information yet it can either still come to Hazel ([hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)) or direct to Stuart -see below.

Below is information from Stuart Mitchell who has volunteered to update the new database for Ely Diocese.

**So we speak the language of MSH, the database should be referred to as MU Portal or the Portal.**

**For the purpose of Portal business I have created this email address [muportalely@gmail.com](mailto:muportalely@gmail.com)**

So, a bit of work to be done and a need for all the up to date 2005 branch returns as soon as possible.

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**2026 Mothers' Union Membership Subscription is £25. This will all go to Mary Sumner House and there will be no MU Diocesan subscription.**

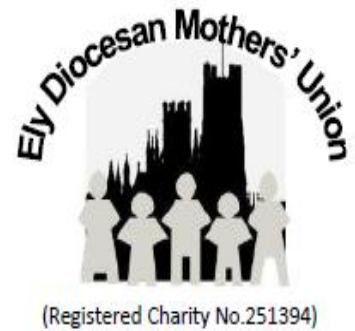




# Newsletter

## October

### 2025



#### WORLDWIDE

Our link diocese of Lusaka in Zambia had Mothers' Union members from Uganda come to visit in September. It must have been wonderful to see them all travelling in their Mothers' Union uniforms. If you are able to go to the Anglican Diocese of Lusaka Mothers' Union Facebook page, you can watch many video clips of the visitors' arrival and the wonderful greeting they received. *Irene Porter*



## A REFLECTION

*Philip Baker (26<sup>th</sup> September 2025)*

We will soon arrive at All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween. This is, as we know, the evening before All Hallows' Day, or as we usually term it, All Saints Day and is widely celebrated by children dressing up as ghostly characters and being given sweets. The connection between celebrating the lives of saints and remembering our ancestors, and dressing up as ghosts is clear. But the modern celebration has distorted our understanding.

Based on pagan celebrations, All Saints Day arose from an edict issued by Pope Gregory in the eighth century that November the first be a day to honour saints, a term originating from the Latin "sanctus" meaning holy or sacred. I like the definition in Wikipedia that tells us that "The Feast of All Hallows, the Solemnity of All Saints, and Hallowmas, is a Christian solemnity celebrated in honour of all the saints of the church, whether they are known or unknown". To me that final phrase is vitally important, "whether known or unknown".

When we think of "Saints" our minds turn to the named saints who have achieved their sainthood through recognition of deeds in support of the Faith. And this is fine, but we might overlook all those who might fall into the definition of a saint ("a person recognised for their exceptional holiness, virtue, or service to God") but have not been formally elected or "canonised", and I would suggest that there are many people who might fall into that category but conduct their "saintliness" largely unseen.

Continuing the theme, All Saints Day (on first day November) is followed on the second of November by All Souls Day, when we commemorate all those who have passed within the Faith. This is an opportunity to remember all those who followed in the path shown us by Jesus and lived their lives as best they were able according to His rules. We will all know someone we have walked the way with who fits into that measure, and probably within the Mothers' Union somewhere in the world.

So, this Halloween, let us gather our thoughts around the Christian aspects of this festival, starting with the internationally recognised saints and then moving through the ranks to include all those we have known and loved who have done their best on this world for the love of God.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two grant applications were received by the trustees, for the **Susan Baker Memorial Fund**. These were awarded to Littleport towards expenses to help expand their Foodbank work into a Community Hub and to Bury for resources, seating and storage for a dedicated children's space. Information and Application forms can be found on the Ely Diocesan website in the Mothers' Union section which is under 'Your Church In Action'.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence and Rise Up**

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November at Ely Cathedral**

**12.15pm - Prayer Vigil lasting 30 minutes**

**Gathering outside for 1.03pm for 1 minute banner witness.**

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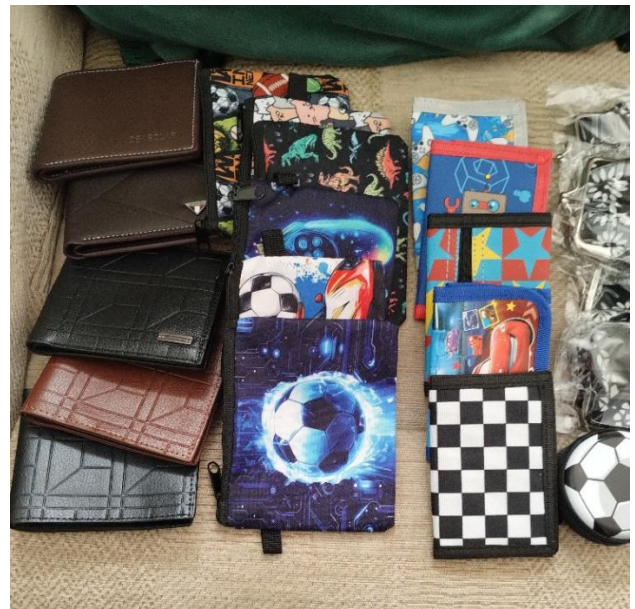


## PURSES FOR AFIA



Thanks to members who have bought and made purses and wallets for the children who go on AFIA holidays.

I now have enough in reserve to keep us going for at least all of next year. They love receiving this special gift that they can keep, even if the money is spent!



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## Autumn Diocesan Meeting

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October**

St. Johns Church, Waterbeach. 9.30am – 2pm.

**The Autumn Diocesan meeting will be held at St. Johns Church, Waterbeach Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**10am – 2pm (coffee/tea from 9.30am)**

**Speaker is Julia Jameson. MU Zonal Trustee on new central initiatives and news about 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

**Cards for sale inc. Christmas cards.**

**Displays of MU projects and worldwide news**

**Tea/coffee supplied**

**Please bring a packed lunch**

**All are welcome**

## YVONNE CUBITT RIP



It is with sadness that I report the death of Yvonne Cubitt who had just had her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. She will be much missed. She was a very longstanding member of Balsham MU – over 60 years and her mother was also a loyal member for many, many years.

Yvonne was a very regular member of Balsham Church congregation and for many years was organist and also in charge of the flower arranging. She designed (without a computer) kneelers for the high altar communion rail and the nave altar rail. Latterly she became the Sacristan which she did until Covid when I took over from her. It was only in the last few months that Yvonne was unable to get to church.

She leaves behind Gordon also in his 90s and her daughter Charlotte and her son-in-law Trevor who live next door and their two children.

May Yvonne Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

*Joanna Sanders, Balsham Branch Leader*



**With apologies to Catherina Griffiths who sent this to me earlier in the year but I missed putting it in the Newsletter**

Reading about Win Norton in the newsletter reminded me that she always encouraged us to wear our MU badges.

About 20 years ago I was at a Palm Sunday service in Gibraltar when I noticed that the lady next to me had an MU badge on. We got chatting and in the course of conversation I discovered that she was the president of the Central European Diocese.

More recently, I was line dancing and the lady in front of me turned round and noticed my badge. She was Branch Leader and Church warden at Potton Church (Bedfordshire). We got chatting and this resulted in a few of our St Neots members attending their World Day of Prayer service. They are a very small branch (and in St Alban's Diocese) but we have shared our programme and some of their members hope to join us at our Quiet Day.

Wear your badge whenever you can – you never know where it will lead you!

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### Database Information

There are still a few branches who have not returned their list of members for this year to either me ([hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)) or Stuart [muportalely@gmail.com](mailto:muportalely@gmail.com), who is doing the database. He has made good progress so please do it as soon as possible if you are one of them.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Diocesan Members' Lunch.

We are not planning a Diocesan Members' Lunch this year, due to fewer attending and rising costs. However, we hope that as we celebrate our Mothers' Union 150th Anniversary next year, there will be something else for you to come along to, as we are looking at planning events that cover locations across the Diocese, as well as in Ely and at our Diocesan Days.

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**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2026** 150<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Anniversary Service at Ely Cathedral  
**10<sup>th</sup> June 2026**, a celebratory service at St Paul's Cathedral at 5pm is the official 150<sup>th</sup> service for Mothers' Union  
**11<sup>th</sup> June 2026**, 150<sup>th</sup> year Annual Gathering at the Emmanuel Centre, next to Mary Sumner House.

**Thursday Prayer in Ely  
Cathedral and on Zoom  
10.30am on 16<sup>th</sup> October**

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

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628  
Passcode 080127**

**2026 Mothers' Union Membership Subscription is £25.**  
This will all go to Mary Sumner House and there will be no MU Diocesan subscription.

**Ely Diocesan M U contacts**

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>  
**Ros 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)**  
**Hazel 07747022431 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)**



# Newsletter November 2025



## ELY DIOCECAN DAY OCTOBER 2025 with JULIA JAMIESON, Zonal Trustee for Canterbury Province



MU displays of worldwide and local initiatives.







### **Talk by Julia Jamieson, MU Zonal Trustee, on new central initiatives:**

Julia spoke about her background and said that she had been introduced to MU by her mother-in-law, and enjoyed attending her local afternoon group to listen to a speaker and have a cup of tea. She had been warmly welcomed by the group but wanted to explore more about MU by attending Deanery and Diocesan Meetings as well as the Annual Gatherings. She saw the positive impact that MU was making on the world around her and the wider world. She spent 3 years on the World-Wide Board and then

3 years on the new World-Wide Board as part of a leadership team of 14.

**Global MU:** What does it mean to us? There was a short discussion in small groups. It is not just a few old ladies in a church hall; It is central to Africa; AFIA; in parts of the world it is women's empowerment through literacy projects; savings groups; prevention of gender based violence; financial sustainability. The central MU role is governance, to ensure that we are working within charity laws and financial controls. It is a member led movement and so although the Board makes decisions it is guided by its membership. Trustees can be asked to serve on additional boards, but it is only trustees who have a vote. Julia asked "How can we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and encourage others to join us?" it is our duty to keep the flame of MU alive around the world. Care and concern is important locally and helping those in adversity is the core objective. Although members in Britain and Ireland are contributing most financially there is an affiliation agreement for overseas members similar to subscription. Support is needed in order to set up projects until they are self-sufficient. The Literacy Project after 20 years is an example. Those who benefited are trained to serve and support each other. The programmes have restored dignity. We are a "handing up" not a "handing out" community. There are still many members unable to contribute due to war, displacement, or just struggling to survive. In Burundi, one of the poorest countries, 144,000 have learned to read and write; 7,500 have accessed parenting education and this has improved relationships. We have changed lives by giving a voice to the voiceless. Julia urged us to continue to support our fellow MU members with prayer and contributions.

**Central Charity:** Bev Jullien oversees a reduced staff team of 20 and all that they do is scrutinised by the elected trustees. There is targeted support for Britain and Ireland members and conversations from the Leadership Conference are available on the resource's hub of the MU website. The World-Wide Board is tasked with putting faith back into all we undertake, and there is a personal chaplain for the board. There will also be a new central chaplain.

**150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** We need to celebrate: where we have come from; what we have accomplished; and our faith and love for the Lord. In 1876 women did not enjoy the freedom we have today. The MU challenged social norms and fought against injustice and Mary Sumner prayed when she faltered. Julia asked "How are you using your gifts?" "How can we stay connected?" we need to look beyond the boundaries and energise and support one another. The MU website has details of information about central celebrations including the service at St Pauls Cathedral and the Annual Gathering. The Global Gathering is in South Africa from 30<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2026. We need to consider what we can do to support MU either by being a Martha or a Mary.





Jean and Hazel attended a harvest lunch with members of the **Wisbech and North Nene Branch** and other invited guests. A traditional ploughman's lunch and fruit crumble was served and a food raffle raised funds for the MU.

For the MU 150<sup>th</sup> celebration, they are planning a diocesan wide, Hands Across the World Display, and are asking all members to draw around their hands on A4 paper and add when they joined MU and what made them join. These will be laminated and cut out. More details in the December Newsletter.

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**Sue Clayden** announced, at the Diocesan Day, that on **10<sup>th</sup> December**, also Human Rights Day, there will be online prayers and reflections from India, Liberia and Papua New Guinea, thinking about how domestic violence impacts women throughout the **Anglican Communion**.

**A reminder below that you need to register for these meetings. You have a choice of either the 8am meeting or the 6pm meeting (held twice to accommodate time zones across the world).**

Please find the zoom registration links below for the 10th December online prayer meetings:

**Zoom meeting: Dec 10, 2025 08:00 AM Universal Time UTC**

**Prayer for 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/hAfo8S0uSDisfpHBUR3DA>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Zoom meeting: Dec 10, 2025 6:00 PM Universal Time UTC**

**Prayer for 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/DUdDvAFsT96yTa3w2ZxlUg>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

## A REFLECTION

*Philip Baker (26<sup>th</sup> September 2025)*

We will soon arrive at All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween. This is, as we know, the evening before All Hallows' Day, or as we usually term it, All Saints Day and is widely celebrated by children dressing up as ghostly characters and being given sweets. The connection between celebrating the lives of saints and remembering our ancestors, and dressing up as ghosts is clear. But the modern celebration has distorted our understanding.

Based on pagan celebrations, All Saints Day arose from an edict issued by Pope Gregory in the eighth century that November the first be a day to honour saints, a term originating from the Latin "sanctus" meaning holy or sacred. I like the definition in Wikipedia that tells us that "The Feast of All Hallows, the Solemnity of All Saints, and Hallowmas, is a Christian solemnity celebrated in honour of all the saints of the church, whether they are known or unknown". To me that final phrase is vitally important, "whether known or unknown".

When we think of "Saints" our minds turn to the named saints who have achieved their sainthood through recognition of deeds in support of the Faith. And this is fine, but we might overlook all those who might fall into the definition of a saint ("a person recognised for their exceptional holiness, virtue, or service to God") but have not been formally elected or "canonised", and I would suggest that there are many people who might fall into that category but conduct their "saintliness" largely unseen.

Continuing the theme, All Saints Day (on first day November) is followed on the second of November by All Souls Day, when we commemorate all those who have passed within the Faith. This is an opportunity to remember all those who followed in the path shown us by Jesus and lived their lives as best they were able according to His rules. We will all know someone we have walked the way with who fits into that measure, and probably within the Mothers' Union somewhere in the world.

So, this Halloween, let us gather our thoughts around the Christian aspects of this festival, starting with the internationally recognised saints and then moving through the ranks to include all those we have known and loved who have done their best on this world for the love of God.

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## **MU Photos and Prose Anthology for 150th Anniversary.**

*Debbie Tye*

Some of you will remember the photo project we ran during 2020, which was turned into a photo video of pictures from members.

We would like to run something similar for 2026, but also widen the content.

I will be publishing full details next month of how to enter your contribution, but this is advance notice so you can start taking photos in December with a Christmas theme, and also be thinking about what might be relevant for next year.

**For the Photos:** They can be anything that represents Mothers' Union activities: e.g. meetings with speakers, afternoon teas, outings/events, services, knitting or sewing for MU projects. If taking pictures of people please ensure you have their permission. Ideally, they should be taken during 2026 (with the exception of Christmas photos this December).

**For the Prose/Art:** This could include written or art work either focussed on MU or with a special meaning relating to faith, family, friendship and fellowship, or God's world and creation: e.g. poems, prayers, a short piece about what MU means to you, a hymn/song that is special. If you are creative with art it could be a drawing/painting that you have done.

We will work out the finer details of how to collate all your ideas and produce an application form for your entries. But this is to get your creative ideas forming, so we can put together a commemoration of our 150th year, which can be published in a video or booklet.

## Canterbury Provincial Gathering.

Debbie Tye

Jean, Debbie and Audrey attended the Canterbury Provincial Gathering in Oxford on Saturday 27 September.

We were welcomed by Comfort Fearon, Provincial President, who reminded us that we are “stronger together”. We heard talks from members around the Province, about projects they had been working on, as well as many displays from each diocese. Bishop Jo Bailey Wells led the Eucharist and gave a talk on: “Tales of the Unexpected”. She is the former Bishop of Dorking, and now Deputy Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. In her talk she shared her thoughts as a “Bishop passing by”, and conveyed glimpses of the MU through her eyes in her work around the Communion.

We were joined online in the afternoon by Kathleen Snow (Worldwide President) who gave a presentation, and spoke about how “God’s Love reaches to the heavens and to each other”. We also enjoyed a Puppet Show, given by “Parababble Puppets”. We heard more about plans and initiatives for 2026, our 150th Anniversary Year.

It was a very enjoyable day, and so encouraging to meet up with many other MU members from across the Province.





Kigali Diocese Mothers' Union, in Rwanda, held a conference in October. It's lovely to see the attendees in their Mothers' Union dresses. In one photo you will see Bishop Nathan, the Bishop of Kigali. I have had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Bishop Nathan on several occasions when he has visited Ely Diocese and in Rwanda.



\*\*\*\*\*

Sadly, last year one of our members at **Yaxley** passed away. We were delighted when her son contacted us recently offering us Sheila's Cross to have at our meetings. Sheila is fondly remembered by us all and will now be with us at our meetings. *Irene Porter*



On Saturday 31st November, **St Peters Yaxley** held a "Light Festival ". The Mothers' Union entry was an arch with Angel fairy lights. One photo shows before the main lights and one after. *Irene*



#### Christmas cards, diaries and calendars are available now

Branches and individuals can either get in touch with me, order online for themselves or get together as a branch and put in a branch order. If your order is over £60 postage is free. Please remember to put Ely in as your diocese so that we can receive a branch related grant. *Hazel*

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

**SEPTEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER:** "Good Stewardship" – Led by Revd Paula Spalding, Chaplain, Ely Diocesan MU.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vO69txPP1OU>

**OCTOBER THURSDAY PRAYER:** "Peace" – Led by Sue Claydon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsEZ9BININ8>

## Christmas Wish List 2025

### Refuges and Hostels

**Fenland Refuge.** Sue Claydon ([sueclaydon112@gmail.com](mailto:sueclaydon112@gmail.com))

Washing up bowls filled with house hold cleaning products, festive foods, Vouchers. (Asda, Aldi)

**Mid-Cambs Refuge.** Liz Elsom ([jimelson@talktalk.net](mailto:jimelson@talktalk.net))

Washing up bowls filled with household cleaning products. Vouchers (Iceland, Tesco, Lidl)

**Whitworth House (young women)** Jo Wibberley ([jowibs.mu@gmail.com](mailto:jowibs.mu@gmail.com)) Washing up bowls filled with house hold cleaning products, Vouchers (Primark)

**Cambridge Women`s Aid** Maureen Haigh ([gmhaigh@talk21.com](mailto:gmhaigh@talk21.com)) Vouchers.

**Wheatsheaf Close, Ely (young people)** Jean Webb ([jmw35n@gmail.com](mailto:jmw35n@gmail.com)) Vouchers.

**Mary`s Child. Stanground** Maureen Haigh ([gmhaigh@talk21.com](mailto:gmhaigh@talk21.com)) For food hampers and breakfast with Santa.

**By the end of November if possible**

Selection boxes.

Boxes of biscuits for families and individuals.

Boxes of chocolates for families and individuals.

Boxes of tea or coffee for individuals.

Christmas puddings –individual and family size.

Toiletry sets for men and women.

If your branch wishes to support any of the above for your Christmas giving, please get in touch with the named contact to arrange delivery or collection. Mareen Haigh is happy to help if there is a problem.

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**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November at Ely Cathedral  
12.15pm**

**16 Days of Activism against Gender  
Violence and Rise Up**

**Prayer Vigil lasting 30 minutes  
Gathering outside for 1.03pm for 1  
minute banner witness.**



**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2026** 150<sup>th</sup> Diocesan  
Anniversary Service at Ely Cathedral

**10<sup>th</sup> June 2026**, a celebratory service at St  
Paul's Cathedral at 5pm is the official 150<sup>th</sup>  
service for Mothers' Union

**11<sup>th</sup> June 2026**, 150<sup>th</sup> year Annual Gathering  
at the Emmanuel Centre, next to Mary  
Sumner House.

Please find attached the MU prayer adapted to be sung to the well-known hymn tune for "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind".

I felt the urge to produce this while spending a night in hospital a few weeks ago, When I attempted to sing it to branch members at our October meeting, they seemed to approve of it and encouraged me to share it.

*Liz Elson*

## **MOTHERS UNION PRAYER**

*Adapted to be sung to the tune of the hymn, Dear Lord and Father of mankind.*

O loving Lord, we thank you for your love  
so freely given to all.

We pray for families round the world,  
and ask that you will bless the work  
of Mother's Union x 2

Bless all our members everywhere  
and make us shining lights,  
as we seek to share your love  
through strength'ning and encouragement  
of marriage and family life x 2

Empowered by your spirit, and  
in prayer and worship, one,  
in love and service we reach out  
as your hands across the world,  
in Jesus' name, Amen x2

\*\*\*\*\*

**2026 Mothers' Union Membership Subscription is £25. This will all go to Mary Sumner House and there will be no extra MU Diocesan subscription.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Ely Diocesan M U contacts** <https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

**Ros 01223 861846** [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

**Hazel 07747022431** [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)



## What a successful evening!

**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

### *Invitation to our Pudding Evening*

7.45 to 9.30 pm  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October  
Church Hall

You are invited to join us for our pudding evening. This is our fund-raising meeting for the Away From It All Holiday Scheme.

The pudding evening is very enjoyable. You have your main meal at home and then come to the church hall at 7.45 for your pudding. There will be a wonderful selection of puddings on offer with cream, custard or ice cream.

Donations welcome using cash or contactless.

Please come along anytime between 7.45 and 9.30 pm.  
You will be very welcome.

Julie "mu@eastleightonstone.com"



Brampton held their annual "Pudding Evening" in October and this year, 56 people came and they raised £410 for the Away From It All Holiday Scheme. As every year, they advertised the evening in the local magazine, the church newsletter and handed out personal invitations. The evening was open to all, members, guests, people from the church, neighbours and friends in Brampton. The puddings are all made by members and they were delighted when non-members arrived with puddings as well. There was a huge selection of puddings including baked cheesecake, apple crumble, tiramisu, chocolate profiteroles and fruit salad, to name a few. The members provided cream, ice cream and custard to go with the puddings as well as offering tea and coffee. People were asked to list the ingredients of the puddings (to ensure anyone with allergies are informed), provide a named serving spoon or slice and take away any uneaten pudding at the end. They don't sell tickets, but instead, ask for a cash or contactless donation on the evening. A couple of years ago, the branch purchased a "SumUp" machine, and this has proved useful in taking contactless donations using a credit or debit card.. There were leaflets on the tables about the work of the Mothers' Union and the leader gave a brief introduction about the Away From It All Holiday Scheme. If people wanted to find out more about the Mothers' Union, the committee were there to answer questions, but people could also sign up for the monthly newsletter (email) that is sent by the branch. The Branch Leader for Brampton is Julie and her email address is [mu@eastleightonstone.com](mailto:mu@eastleightonstone.com). I am sure she would be willing to answer any questions about holding an evening like this if you are interested.

**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom  
10.30am on 27<sup>th</sup> November.**

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

**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127**



**NEWSLETTER**

**DECEMBER**

**JANUARY**

**2025/6**



# **The 150 Fund Challenge**

Ely Diocese has been challenged by M.S.H. to raise £1,500 or more!

All branches, groups and individuals are asked to join in the challenge, to provide a fund available for MU work worldwide.

Can you raise £150, during 2026?  
Starter funding of £15 is available,  
if needed, or use a “virtual £15!”



*Have fun, raise funds, encourage others to  
“join us and join in”  
during our anniversary year.*

## Come and Celebrate our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

As part of the programme of events for this special year we are planning "Cluster Gatherings" of branches and individual members nearer to where you live, rather than another "central" event. (You will probably be aware that we have a Diocesan service booked for Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August at 2 pm, in Ely Cathedral, and we are awaiting confirmation of the Bishop's Garden marquee to join in the *Big Picnic* in June/July).

**These "Cluster Gatherings" will be in the Granta Deanery; Huntingdon Deanery; March & Yaxley Deaneries; Ely & Fordham and Quy Deaneries and in Cambridge.**

While members are encouraged to attend their nearest Gathering, dates and venues will be circulated, so do feel free to join others if you wish. Most Gatherings will prefer to know numbers in advance.

Each Cluster is free to arrange their own celebration, but we suggest some food, a time for fellowship and worshipping together. These events could also be used as a good way to invite prospective new members to consider joining us, and also for fundraising.

**Advance Notice- Ely & Fordham and Quy Deaneries are planning the Gathering to be a Special Lady Day Service in St Mary's Ely on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March. A date for your diaries and more details will be in the February Newsletter.**

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## MU Pictures and Prose Anthology for 150th Anniversary.

We are going to put together an Anthology to celebrate 150 years of Mothers' Union, which can be published in a booklet and/or video. In 2020 we ran a photo competition, but for 2026 we are widening the content to include written items and artwork, as well as photos.

Full entry details are included in the leaflet attached to this Newsletter.

**For the Photos:** They can be anything that represents Mothers' Union activities: e.g. meetings with speakers, afternoon teas, outings/events, services, knitting or sewing for MU projects. If taking pictures of people please ensure you have their permission. Ideally photos should be taken during 2026 (with the exception of Christmas photos this December).

**For the Prose/Art:** This could include written or artwork either focussed on MU or with a special meaning relating to faith, family, friendship and fellowship, or God's world and creation: e.g. poems, prayers, a short piece about what MU means to you, a hymn/song that is special. If you are creative, it could be a drawing/painting that you have done.

**The closing date for entries is Monday 31st August 2026**, which gives plenty of time to gather photos and other ideas for inclusion. Together let's create a great record of our 150th Anniversary!

Any queries, please contact Debbie Tye on: [MUelyDiocese@hotmail.com](mailto:MUelyDiocese@hotmail.com) or 01353 666883.

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**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom  
10.30am on 11<sup>th</sup> December and 15<sup>th</sup> January  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>  
Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127**

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Hazel 07747022431  
[hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)



## Littleport St George's MU are taking part in St George's Christmas tree festival.

We thought our tree should reflect the activities we do. The members do lots of knitting for good causes, so strips of knitting have been added. We cook cakes, biscuits, soup etc for many parish events, so cooking utensils have been added. African print bows hang on the tree to remind us of the many overseas branches of the Mother's Union, also, paper balls have been constructed using papers with information about the MU. Scattered throughout our tree are praying hands as prayer underpins all we do.

At the side of our tree is a large collection box for donations of toiletries for the women's refuge in Cambridge.



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Once again, we have put up a display in St George's church for the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

All of our MU members drew around their hands onto paper, then cut them out. We stuck sentences from Rise Up on each hand and also more information about getting help and prayers for this cause on our notice board. These prayers will also be read in church during the 16 days.

Best wishes Julieanne Long



Dear members

To celebrate 150 years since the founding of Mothers Union, Wisbech and North Nene branch would like to celebrate by highlighting one line of the Mothers' Union prayer; *reach out your hands across the world.*

To this end, I would like to ask all branches in the diocese, if their members would draw around their hands (one or a pair) and write on them, which branch they belong to and what they like about being an M.U. member.

These need to be done on white A4 size paper but not cut out, as they will need to be laminated. (So please do not crease!) Depending on the amount received, they will then be displayed in St. Peter and St Paul Church Wisbech initially (perhaps outside)

**Please send them to this address;**

**Mrs. Wendy Smith, 24, Quaker Lane, WISBECH, CAMBS. PE13 2JQ**

**No later than Friday 27th March 2026.**

Perhaps this could be done as a branch activity and someone might collectively send them on to me.

Thank you.

Best Wishes.

Wendy Smith, Branch Leader of Wisbech and North Nene Branch.

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#### **SHINGAY DEANERY MOTHERS UNION**

Dear Hazel

It is with sadness that I have to report the closure of our MU branch, Shingay Deanery Mothers Union.

We have tried to keep it going but lack of members has made it very difficult.

Our last meeting will be our Advent service in December.

Most of our members are planning to become Diocesan Members.

We plan to carry on meeting when we can for coffee or lunch.

If possible, we will do a fund-raising day for The Summer of Hope.

Thank you for the support that you and your team have given us.

With Best Wishes

Diane Blundell

Shingay Deanery Mothers Union

*I know Shingay members have tried to continue with their present structure but it has proved impossible. It is good to know that most members want to continue to support the work of the Mothers' Union by becoming Diocesan members. This means they will continue to receive news of what is happening throughout the MU and also have the fellowship of meeting informally.*

*Our thanks go to everyone for all they have done (and will continue to do) to promote the worldwide work of the Mothers' Union.*

*Hazel Williams*

#### **Prayer Diaries**

Do please let us know if you did not receive a copy of the 2026 Prayer Diary in the post during the last month. If you could include your full address, we can then check on the database. Thank You.

## A REFLECTION

Here we are, in Advent, looking forward to Christmas and celebrating the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, fully man and fully God. And we do so with the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in our hearts. It always seems to me that these are expressions of something far deeper, and without which they would have only limited meaning, and that is Faith.

Without our Faith we would just see Jesus as a man, a remarkable man to be sure, but lacking the most important dimension of all, his relationship with God, the creator of all things. It is our Faith that enables us to recognise him as part of the Trinity and the means through which we may find our place with God.

In common with probably every Christian I have struggled to explain Faith. It is easy to dismiss it as “what I believe” but that seems to me to be a cheat. And then I read Hebrews. Of course, I have read it before and again just recently as part of the reading plan I am following. But this time it struck me as never before. Hebrews 11 must be the ultimate definition of Faith. No matter how many times you have read it, I urge you to read it now, or at least before Christmas. It is not very long, but too long to reproduce here, I am afraid, so out with those bibles!

No-one knows who wrote Hebrews, but it was probably in about AD60. It is a letter to encourage early Jewish Christians, who were wavering in their new beliefs, that Jesus is the true fulfilment of Old Testament history and prophecy. Today there are millions of believers, so although we cannot say how influential this particular letter was, it is tempting to consider that it probably played a significant part. When you read it, you might see why.

As we look forward to Christmas we are mindful of the tremendous impact of the birth of baby Jesus, of his coming into the world as one of us. Faith is the gift of God (Eph 2:8-9,) and Jesus shows us how to have faith in God’s promise to save us and bring us to eternal life, how to live by faith until that day. Our faith in Jesus being not simply a remarkable human being, but also the Son of God, in recognising our need for his salvation, gives us stability and hope, which is secure in him. When the day comes, let us be sure to be ready, as the householder in Luke 12:39 is urged to stay awake to be ready for the thief in the night.

*Philip Baker (25<sup>th</sup> November 2025)*

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### **WAVE OF PRAYER DATES for Ely Diocese are December 10th to 12th.**

Please remember our link dioceses of Lusaka, Shyogwe, Sokoto, Ikka and Karimnagar. You have already received Prayer Resources. Included is a suggested list of days for branches to pray with no time slots. This gives you the flexibility to choose a day/time that is convenient for you. Diocesan Members are free to choose their own day.

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### **CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025.**

This year’s appeal focusses on Uganda, which will help roll out the Kingdom Savings & Credit (KSC) Programme across four dioceses.

**As part of the “Big Give” initiative, all online donations made between December 2nd and 9th will be doubled.**

For more info, please visit the website here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/appeal/christmas25/>

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**Sue Clayden** announced, at the Diocesan Day, that there will, on 10<sup>th</sup> December, be online prayers and reflections from India, Liberia and Papua New Guinea, thinking about how domestic violence impacts women throughout the **Anglican Communion**. All details were in the November Newsletter. Registration is needed.



## Get ready for our 150th Anniversary!

### Key B&I Anniversary Events

We are thrilled to announce that the first release of tickets for the **150th Celebratory Service at St Paul's Cathedral, London, on Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 5pm** are selling fast! A second release of tickets will go on sale on **16th December**, so put the date in your diary to ensure you do not miss out!

This promises to be a truly special occasion of worship, thanksgiving, and unity, bringing together members, leaders and clergy from across Britain and Ireland and even further afield!

Tickets are £15 each and can be purchased via Eventbrite. The ticket price contributes towards some of the costs of the service and includes a commemorative 150th booklet for every attendee. Please note, there is an additional Eventbrite fee which is payable at checkout.

Events icon halfway down the page to access the links to the tickets for the service and gathering.

The celebrations will continue with the **Annual Gathering the following day, Thursday 11 June 2026 at the Emmanuel Centre** (next to Mary Sumner House). 10:30 AM – 4:30 PM Tickets for this went on sale earlier this month and are selling fast too!

Tickets for the 150th Celebratory Service at St Paul's are now available to purchase via [Eventbrite here](#).

Tickets for the Annual Gathering are now available to purchase via [Eventbrite here](#).

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### Expression of Interest Deadline extended to 5th December 2025

If your diocese, branch or group would like to take part in the 150th National Challenges, please ensure you complete the Expression of Interest form by 5th December. We don't want anyone to miss out on being part of this historic year of growth, celebration, and action.

For those who have already submitted their form, thank you! Challenge Packs will begin being dispatched within the next week or two. We appreciate your patience as timelines have shifted slightly due to limited capacity at Mary Sumner House, but please be assured that everything is progressing and on its way to you soon.

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KgEiaMHN70WD2D\\_OF7LJmiQpvzaf\\_i1HmrpbAG3odZUNEIDRDE4M1A0M1g0VE9JT09HSUtLUDhTSC4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KgEiaMHN70WD2D_OF7LJmiQpvzaf_i1HmrpbAG3odZUNEIDRDE4M1A0M1g0VE9JT09HSUtLUDhTSC4u)

Ely Diocese have completed an Expression of Interest but in order to receive your own Challenge Pack, and not wait for information through the Newsletter, please submit your own Expression of Interest Form.

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### Celebrating Christmas with MU faith resources

As we draw closer to the reflective season of Advent, MSH have created a set of faith resources for you, your branch, and your community to help prepare your hearts for Christmas. The collection is designed to support you across all areas of your spiritual life featuring reflections, prayers, creative activities, and adaptable worship materials.

Please visit the resources page on our new website [www.mothersunion.org/resources](http://www.mothersunion.org/resources)

The Action Advent calendar gives a daily action to complete for every day of advent and I would highly recommend it. <https://www.mothersunion.org/wp-content/uploads/Advent-Action-Calendar-2025.pdf>



## 16 Days of Violence Against Gender Based Violence and Rise Up



Members met for a 30 min. Prayer Vigil at Ely Cathedral on a wet and windy Saturday. We gathered outside for a Banner Witness afterwards and were delighted that Bishop Dagmar was able to join us. Our thanks go to Michelle Baxter for her help with the display. First ever use of a digital screen for Ely Diocesan MU.

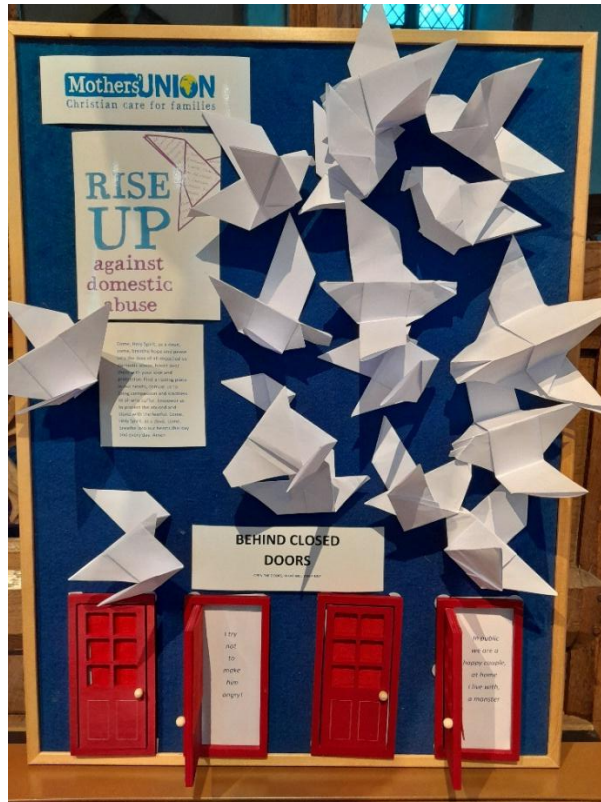
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At our November meeting at Yaxley, Mary Woodley was presented with a certificate to celebrate 60 years of Mothers' Union membership. Mary shared an amusing memory of a Mothers' Union experience.

## Yaxley Branch

For the "16 Days" campaign we will have a "Rise Up" display in church. Members made Rise Up Doves, from instructions on the Mothers' Union website, to place on the board. The display includes four doors which, when opened, tell of what can happen "Behind Closed Doors". Members were also encouraged to follow the 16 Days prayers in their prayer diary.



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## MU Serving Refreshments at Ely Diocesan Synod Meetings.

This year a few of us have been serving refreshments at the Diocesan Synod Meetings, which now take place in St Mary's Church Ely. Coffee, tea and biscuits are served, and we usually have MU info on display.

It would be lovely if we could expand our team to serve in this ministry.

The dates for 2026 are:

Saturday 14 March: 9am-1pm.

Thursday 18 June: 6.45pm-9pm.

Saturday 10 October: 9am-1pm.



Refreshments are usually available at the beginning and half-way through the meetings.

If we have enough people, we could have 2 teams helping at each time slot, and you wouldn't have to be at all the meetings.

Arrival time would be 45 minutes before the start of the meetings, and then helping to clear away at the end.

Our presence here is greatly appreciated and is mentioned on the agenda, with thanks expressed to us by Bishop Dagmar.

If you are interested in helping or finding out more, please contact Debbie Tye ([dmtypost@hotmail.com](mailto:dmtypost@hotmail.com) / 01353 666883).





In our Link Diocese of Lusaka, in Zambia, Clergy wives visited an orphanage "House of Joy" to share their love and deliver supplies. One of the ladies is wearing a wonderful Mothers' Union skirt.

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**2026 Mothers' Union Membership Subscription is £25. This will all go to Mary Sumner House and there will be no extra ELY MU Diocesan subscription.**

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*With best wishes from the MU Ely Diocesan Trustees. May the Light of Love shine upon you this Christmas.*

