

Thursday Prayer 2025



JOIN US and JOIN IN
MU is changing lives

**Thursday Prayer is held in Ely Cathedral
 (usually in the Presbytery), on the 3rd Thursday of every month
 unless otherwise stated, from 10.30-11am**

**They are also held at All Saint's Church, St Ives
 on 4th Thursday of each month at 2.30-3pm**

See dates below.

**Friends and family members are very welcome to attend as well.
 Each month we use a common theme and pray for a special concern.
 We also reflect upon our own membership of the Mothers' Union.
 If you are unable to attend, please use these prayers in your own
 group or home.**

**Thursday Prayer is now available on zoom.
 Please see monthly MU Newsletter for details.**

Dates for Thursday Prayer 2025

	Cathedral, Zoom	St Ives
January	16	23
February	20	27
March	20	27
*April	*24	*10
May	15	22
June	19	26
July	17	24
August	21	28
September	18	25
October	16	23
*November	*27	*20
*December	*11	*18

***Please note the starred months are not on the 3rd Thursday
 and, consequently, the St Ives dates have changed also.**

JANUARY 2025

FOCUS: JOINING GOD WHERE HE IS WORKING

READING: Hebrews 10:24-25

FEBRUARY 2025

FOCUS: MU WORKING WITH PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS AND NONE

READING: Luke 6:27-38

MARCH 2025

FOCUS: GIVING THANKS FOR MOTHERS

READING: Isaiah 7:14

APRIL 2025

FOCUS: CELEBRATING THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

READING: Luke 24:36b-48

MAY 2025

FOCUS: A NEW COMMANDMENT

READING: John 13:31-35

JUNE 2025

FOCUS: PUTTING ON CHRIST

READING: Galatians 3:23-29

JULY 2025

FOCUS: CONTINUING IN FAITH

READING: Colossians 1:15-28

AUGUST 2025

FOCUS: MOTHERS' UNION WORKING IN CHRIST

READING: Hebrews 12:18-29

SEPTEMBER 2025

FOCUS: GOOD STEWARDSHIP

READING: Luke 16:1-13

OCTOBER 2025

Focus: Peace

READING: John 14:27

NOVEMBER 2025

FOCUS: REFUGES

READING: 1 John 3:16-18

DECEMBER 2025

FOCUS: PATIENCE

READING: James 5:7-10

Thursday Prayer

**16th January 2025 at 10.30am at Ely Cathedral and on Zoom
Hazel Williams speaking on Joining God where He is Working**

Thursday Prayer Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628

Passcode: 080127

Joining God where He is Working

Let us begin with a prayer for the New Year. Together we say:

**ALL Lord, at the beginning of this New Year I offer you my life,
Come take my voice, may the words I speak be filled with encouragement and goodness.
Come take my hands, may the work they create be generous and giving.
Come take my feet, may the journeys I walk be led by your Spirit within.**

This prayer is for the month of January from our Prayer Diary

Father, grant us grace to dwell and grow in the knowledge of your love for all people and nations, and in all circumstances. We lift our voice in praise and thanksgiving for the beautiful tapestry of diversity woven into the fabric of unity. In the kaleidoscope of cultures, languages and traditions, we see your boundless creativity and love. Help us to embrace diversity with open hearts, celebrating the gifts each individual brings. Amen.

Reading: Hebrews 10: 24-25

Loving Father, we join in celebration with our worldwide family of God; in one heart, to glorify your name. Together we bring our worship, together we bring our praise. We give thanks for our global family whose lives of faithful action shine as a beacon of hope in the communities they serve. Unite us in worship; build us in service, as together we seek to share your love. Amen

Reflection

In January we also celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, well known to us all, I am sure. Very often unity is seen as working hard to be the same as everyone else. But we are all unique, created that way by our Heavenly Father. We all have different cultures and experiences and approach worship in different ways, but we worship the same God who loves us and died for us on the cross. As we begin a new year, with all that it will bring, let us be united in prayer and worship and step forth together in faith.

Something that crops up quite often, usually from those who do not know me well, is the question "Are you in the WI or Mothers' Union?" Confusion between the two is common. I help them distinguish by explaining, "Mothers' Union is a worldwide organisation with members in 84 countries and we do have members who are not mothers as well as those who are male".

We continue to spend our time 'Joining God where He is Working' in many different ways.

In this country the Away From It All (AFIA) scheme is very familiar. It began over 50 years ago aiding families to have a holiday, something they might not otherwise be able to afford. The chance to enjoy time together with less stress in a different environment can change lives.

The crafting and knitting, loved by many members, has a real ripple effect. As well as the pure enjoyment of doing it, passing items on to those in need in hospitals, care homes and worldwide can make all the difference to their lives.

Many countries have a literacy programme. Sometimes with the help of savings groups and training in starting small businesses both women and men, are given the skills needed, to help support their families. The knock-on effect is that their children are then able to take part in education, breaking a circle of poverty.

The campaigning that takes place across the world Against Gender Based Violence and Modern Slavery can take a very different form depending on where you live. The priorities for the way in which members support young people are not necessarily the same in parts of Africa and India as they are in Britain and Ireland.

We worship and dress in different ways. How many of us have envied the different 'uniforms' worn across the world by MU members. Or been uplifted by the joyful music and singing at their services.

At the Mothers' Union retreat which took place last November we were invited by a group of members of the Reformed Church International (Zimbabwe) to join in with one of their (lively) worship sessions. Very different to our regular worship I suspect, but the same God.

This has all been achieved by organisations like the Mothers' Union working in their own groups, as well as across the world. continuing to raise awareness of the needs within different communities.

The prayer for today in our Prayer Diary is *'May we offer our individual gifts and skills, given to us by God, to work through Mothers' Union towards building the Kingdom of God on earth. Who can you invite to a Mothers' Union activity to experience this movement of faith and justice'*.

The theme for this year is Join Us and Join In. We know that membership of the MU is increasing across the world with 4 million members helping to build a future where everyone can thrive. We know in our own branches the benefits of being a member. Let us encourage others to be part of this great movement. It will not happen unless we play our part.

Let us start our time of prayer, for our worldwide organisation, by saying together the Thursday Prayer:

ALL: Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Intercessions - We pray for:

The worldwide work of the Mothers Union, our new Worldwide President Kathleen Snow.

The Chief Executive, Bev Jullien and for all those who work at Mary Sumner House, supporting members.

Our province of Canterbury and all the members of the Canterbury Province and our new Provincial President Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our whole Diocese, for our Diocesan vice-presidents, Jean, Debbie and Hazel, for those on the Trustee Board and those leading branches, our deaneries, our chaplains and our members.

We also pray for the many countries around the world where there are troubles and people are suffering, our local parishes, our families, and our friends, and give thanks for our many blessings and anyone known to us who is in need or unwell.

In the Wave of Prayer today we especially pray for:

The Seychelles; Bukedi in Uganda; Enugu in Nigeria; Birmingham in England and Marathwada in India. Also, for the Mothers' Union Diocese of Ely's worldwide links of Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria and Karimnagar in India and our Diocesan links with Kigali and Vellore

Short Silence.

Let us join together in the Mothers' Union prayer we know so well.

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name. Amen

Our hymn for today is In Christ there is no East or West.

1. In Christ there is no east or west,
In Him no south or north,
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

2. In Him shall true hearts ev'rywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord
Close-binding all mankind.

3. Join hands then, brothers of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be;
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me.

4. In Christ now meet both east and west,
In Him meet south and north;
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

Our final prayer for this service is a prayer for courage to do all we can to support the Mothers' Union.

**Courage comes from the heart
and we are always welcomed by God,
the Heart of all being.**

**We bear witness to our faith,
knowing that we are called
to live lives of courage,
love and reconciliation
in the ordinary and extraordinary
moments of each day.**

**We bear witness, too, to our failures
and our complicity in the fractures of our world.
May we be courageous today.
May we learn today.
May we love today.**

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us
all, now and evermore. Amen**

MOTHERS' UNION THURSDAY PRAYER: 20 FEBRUARY 2025

"MU Working with People of All Faiths and None".

ZOOM INFO

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8IuyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>
(MEETING ID: 852 0929 8628 & PASSCODE: 080127)

Good Morning everyone. And welcome to the February Thursday Prayer which is on the theme of **"MU Working with People of All Faiths and None".**

We will begin with a few **prayers**, followed by singing the **hymn**.

FEBRUARY THURSDAY PRAYER. WE SAY TOGETHER:

ALL: Lord, we hear your word; let us be doers of your will. Christ our Lord, you showed the world your love through actions of mercy as well as words of life. Your practical deeds of kindness are ours to emulate. Your loving model of servanthood is ours to follow. Heavenly Father, help us to follow your ways to enable our work to flourish. May the love of God be seen in us as we live out our faith through action. **Amen.**

From the MU Annual Prayer Diary for February: "Membership".

We give thanks to you, Lord for our membership in the global Mothers' Union.

May we be blessed with a sense of connection and belonging.

May we accept the call in the power of the Holy Spirit to grow in faith.

May we be empowered in all that we do and say to help others.

May we bloom where you plant us, O Lord. **Amen.**

Today's Prayer:

Triune God, in your three persons we have all we need as individuals and as Mothers' Union.

Inspire us with creative ways to meet the challenges we face as we mark nearly 150 years of this incredible movement. **Amen.**

We now sing the hymn: **Brother, sister, let me serve you.**

HYMN:

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey,
And companions on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping;
When you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony;
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant too.

Richard Gillard (1977 Scripture in Song)

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## Reading: Luke 6:27-38

<sup>27</sup> 'But to you who are listening I say: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup> 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

<sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

<sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup> 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

## TALK: "MU Working with People of All Faiths and None"

As I began to think about the subject for this month's Thursday Prayer, I thought I would start by looking at the Mothers' Union website, to see where MU was working around the world. We may already know that MU is active in 84 countries. But when I started looking at all the countries represented, I was suddenly aware of how many lives MU must be touching. I thought I would try and pick out some stories of MU's work, and would focus on our link Dioceses in Africa and India.

**In Zambia, our link is with Lusaka.** Zambia is located in central Africa, and shares its border with eight other countries. Although some of its neighbours have gone through some very difficult periods in their history, throughout most of its own history, Zambia has remained relatively stable.

Unemployment, trafficking, violence against women, and the economic empowerment of women are all issues affecting family life in Zambia and ones which Mothers' Union are actively addressing at the local level. There are more than 12,000 MU members across the country acting as agents of change and transformation within communities.

Their many outreach projects include: Church and Community Mobilisation; Campaigning against gender-based violence; Marriage preparation; and Health awareness programmes.

**In Rwanda, our link is with Shyogwe.** Rwanda is located in central Africa, and is known as the "land of a thousand hills". During the genocide in 1994 thousands fled into neighbouring countries, but in recent years Rwanda has itself become a safe haven for those fleeing from conflict in DR Congo and Burundi. Today, Rwanda is endeavouring to rebuild and strengthen its economy, with a growing tourism industry and exports of coffee and tea. Mothers' Union was started in Rwanda in 1966. More than 24,000 MU members across the country are actively engaging in initiatives to transform the lives of individuals, families and whole communities.

Responding to local needs, their projects include: Health awareness programmes; Parenting Programme; Savings and Credit groups; Peace and reconciliation; Marriage preparation and counselling; Support for widows; Sunday School; Addressing gender-based violence; and Vocational skills training.

**In Nigeria, our link is with Sokoto & Ikka.** Nigeria is located in Western Africa, and is Africa's most populous country and the seventh most populated country in the world. More than 190 million people live in the country, with an ever-growing population, and more than 250 ethnic groups and over 500 additional indigenous languages. Nigeria is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's largest economies and relies heavily on oil as its main source of revenue, yet despite this it is estimated that more than 60% of Nigeria's population still live in extreme poverty. Mothers' Union has been present in Nigeria for well over 100 years having started in 1908. Conservative estimates of membership numbers start at 60,000 but in reality numbers could be far greater than this. MU is very active in creating opportunities for women and young girls to reach their full potential, working closely alongside the Women's Guild in each diocese.



Outreach activities include: Hospital visitation; Health clinics; Support for widows and orphans; Day care centres/Nursery schools; Marriage preparation; Vocational training; Orphan care; Prison ministry; and Parenting Programme.

**In India, our link is with Karimnagar.** With more than 1.3 billion people, the south Asian country of India is the second-most populous country in the world, only outnumbered by China. Despite rapid economic development in the last few decades, India still has high levels of poverty, particularly in rural areas. One of the major problems facing India today is human trafficking, with the United Nations estimating that up to 65 million people in India are affected by human trafficking. Mothers' Union is affiliated with the Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (WFCS) in both North and South India. Members are very active within their local communities reaching out to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, often women and girls.

Their work includes programmes such as: Vocational skills training; Campaigning against gender-based violence; Marriage preparation; and Health awareness programmes.

We remind ourselves of the Vision, Mission, and Aims of Mothers' Union, as written on the MU website.

**Vision:** MU's Vision is a world where everyone prospers. We actively pursue this vision through prayer and action, helping to build confident people and resilient communities. Our movement seeks to bring about justice, challenge prejudice and advocate change.

**Mission:** We aim to show our Christian faith by helping the sustainable transformation of communities worldwide. We do this by helping to nurture strong relationships at all levels, promoting peace and reconciliation locally, nationally and globally.

**We aim to:**

- Encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children.
- Maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.
- Promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.
- Help those whose family life has met with adversity.
- Promote and support married life.

May we continue to uphold these values as we seek to share the love of God and good news of Jesus in our communities, and live lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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The Theme of the MU FEBRUARY MIDDAY PRAYERS is "Membership".

The Focus for Thursdays is **"Membership is like a Gem"**.

Please join in the words in **BOLD**.

"Real membership in Christ is like a gem, in that it is precious." (*Beulah McClanahan, adapted*)

"Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her." Proverbs 3:15

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for your unfailing love and the infinite mercy you constantly bestow on us, even when we least deserve it.

✠ We pray Lord that you grant us...

ALL:...the humility to realize that everything is possible, only as a result of your enduring grace and mercy.

✠ We pray Lord that you grant us...

ALL:...the wisdom to discern you hold the future, even when we don't know what it holds.

✠ We pray Lord that you grant us...

ALL:...the confidence to remember that you are always in full control in our lowest lows and highest highs.

✠ We pray Lord that you grant us...

ALL:...the faith and understanding that you will never leave your children and that we shall RECEIVE as long as we BELIEVE.

All of this we ask in the Mighty Name of Jesus. **Amen.** (*Gemina Archer-Davies, Mothers' Union USA*)

ALL: Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for your unfailing love.

May we continue to have hearts of gratitude and share your love with others through our work and service in the Mothers' Union. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

WE PRAY TOGETHER: THE THURSDAY PRAYER.

ALL: Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our intercessions. We pray for:

- The worldwide work of the Mothers' Union;
- Kathleen Snow, our Worldwide President;
- Our Chief Executive, Bev Jullien; All who work in Mary Sumner House;
- Our new Board of Trustees; and our Vice-Presidents: Jean, Hazel and Debbie; those leading and serving on the Task Groups of: Faith in Action, Praying our Faith, Finance & Administration, and Communications;
- Our province of Canterbury and Comfort Fearon, our Provincial President;
- Our Worldwide Links: Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnagar in India; Plus Diocesan Links with Kigali & Vellore.

WAVE OF PRAYER: 19-21 February

- Free State in South Africa; Bondo in Kenya; Ogbia & Offa in Nigeria; Swansea & Brecon in Wales; Argentina and Uruguay

And in the **Anglican Communion Cycle of Prayer** we remember:

The Diocese of Maciene - The Anglican Church of Mozambique and Angola
(Igreja Anglicana de Mocambique e Angola)

We also pray for:

- Our local parishes, our families, and our friends, and give thanks for our many blessings.
- Anyone known to us who is in need or unwell.
- The many countries around the world where there are troubles and people are suffering.

~~~ PAUSE FOR REFLECTION ~~~

WE SAY TOGETHER: THE MOTHERS' UNION PRAYER.

ALL: Loving Lord, We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

We conclude with this prayer of commitment as we go forward on our Christian journey:

ALL: As Jesus taught us, we commit ourselves to welcome strangers into our midst, to care for the poor, to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to support justice in our community. In the name of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit we pledge ourselves to work and pray for peace: Peace in our homes, Peace in our communities, Peace in our world. Amen.

We say THE GRACE ALL TOGETHER.

May The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

THURSDAY PRAYERS

In Ely Cathedral March 2025

Zoom connection details.

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

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628

Passcode: 080127

Welcome to Ely Cathedral for our time of prayer together.

Focus this month in our Prayer Diary is “Giving Thanks for Mothers” but as we are in just the second week of Lent, I would like to broaden our thinking to what this time of Lent can mean to us.

The designated Reading is Isaiah 7:14

“The Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him Emmanuel.”

As we know, that son was Jesus, and Mary would suffer the utmost heartbreak that a mother could face, the death of her son.

Mothering Sunday comes half way through Lent, that important festival in the Christian calendar, when we should be preparing ourselves for the events of Easter. We can only wonder at how much Mary knew of what was in store for Jesus, and if she too was preparing her heart for the future, for the difficult times he would face during the following years. Did she know of Jesus’ time of preparation in the desert?

Luke, in ch 4, tells us how Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was tempted by the devil who said, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’

Picture this DESERT PLACE, a barren, rocky place, little if any water. A very difficult place to live.

This is where Jesus went to be alone before beginning his work for God, to prepare himself, to ask His Father to be alongside him in whatever life would throw at him.

We may not be living in a desert, but there may be times when we experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. We can be comforted in the knowledge that Jesus experienced that same isolation and loneliness as he prepared himself for the time ahead.

While he was in the desert, the devil tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread for himself. He resisted that temptation but he did become known for feeding people who were hungry for food (he did feed the 5000!), or for love, for a word of encouragement or acceptance. His actions during his ministry show us what a truly caring life looks like.

It is part of the remit of MU to care for families in all situations. We do this as a group in our branches, or individually, by the actions we take through local projects, and also through our “Make a Mother’s Day” appeal. This appeal raises funds for our work to provide courses in parenting, leadership, literacy and many other ways of empowering women to improve the life of families and their communities.

Mothering Sunday gives us and our churches a chance to make contact with families in our communities, and those who no longer have family around them. May we be empowered to look out for those who might need that loving care.

While in the desert, Jesus would have seen the night sky alive with stars. When we look up to the stars, the expanse of the heavens makes us realise that we are just a small part of God's creation. Even so, each one of us is so important to God that he knows each one of us by name.

Jesus cared so much for us, and for the mission that God had given him, that he was preparing to give up his life as an atonement for our turning away from a righteous path. As part of our preparation for Easter, we should be looking for ways in which we can better emulate the life of Jesus in our relationships with those we meet every day.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is called the 'Light of the World', and he asked that we should be the light shining on the world, that light should shine through each one of us. How can we share the Light of Jesus with others? Can we reflect his love through our actions?

In our annual Prayer diary for this year, the reflection for March shows how women can be that light. It speaks to us particularly of women living in societies so very different to ours here in England, but helps us to understand what women can achieve. March is in many ways, a month for women as we mark International Women's Day and Mothering Sunday. Women once were deemed the weaker sex, yet so often they have an abundance of power and strength inherent in their very beings. Simply because of love! Women are also tender, gentle, nurturing, but in one of the world's great dichotomies, they are also strong, tenacious and courageous. Whenever the moment arises, it is often women who are at the forefront of calling to protect the innocent, defend the helpless and to stand resolute against injustice. As members of Mothers' Union, we are called upon to support such actions, and need to ask for God's help to fulfil our 'mission'.

I hope that the hymn that I have chosen will help us to feel the love and strength of a God who watches over us, through the good times and the bad. He is there to help us if we ask.

HYMN:

Lead us heav'nly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but thee;
Yet possessing ev'ry blessing
If our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us,
All our weakness thou dost know,
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
Lone and dreary, faint and weary
Through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God descending,
Fill our hearts with heav'nly joy,
Love with ev'ry passion blending,
Pleasure that can never cloy,
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.

We'll end our time together in prayer, first with the prayer for March in the Prayer Diary.

Father, we thank you that through the sacrificial love of Christ we have been shown the transcending and transforming power of love. Thank you for the unending grace and redemption found in his sacrifice. Thank you for his selfless sacrifice, which exemplifies the depth of your love for us. May we reflect his love in all we do. Help us to be people showing love for others through inclusion, forgiveness, compassion and social justice. In your holy name we pray.

Dear God, Creator of all things, we believe there is a purpose in everything that you have created. Help us to discover the purpose in all that you have created through the wisdom and love you have given us.

May you always be in the hearts of mothers so that they may raise your children with love. Let them overcome all the challenges they face with a kindness like yours as their children grow up. May they fall asleep every night with a thankful heart for all that you have provided for them. Amen

Lord, we pray for

The worldwide work of the Mothers' Union, our new Worldwide President Kathleen Snow.

The Chief Executive, Bev Jullien and for all those who work at Mary Sumner House, supporting members.

Our province of Canterbury and all the members of the Canterbury Province and our new Provincial President Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our whole Diocese, for our Diocesan vice-presidents, Jean, Debbie and Hazel, for those on the Trustee Board and those leading branches, our Branch Liaison Officers, our Chaplain, and all our members. May they feel your love and guiding hand in all they do for the work of Mothers' Union.

We also pray for the many countries around the world where there are troubles and people are suffering, our local parishes, our families, our friends, and anyone known to us who is in need or unwell.

We thank you Lord for our many blessings.

We remember and pray for our Worldwide Links:

Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnagar in India; Plus the Diocesan Links with Kigali & Vellore.

In our Wave of Prayer for today we also asked to pray for Antisiranana in Madagascar; Busoga in Uganda; Yola & Oke-Ogun in Nigeria; Algoma in Canada & Jabalpur in India

Let us say together the Mothers' Union Prayer:

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen

The Thursday Prayer

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of the Mothers' Union. We are Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Let us stand and close our time together by saying the Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy spirit, be with us all this day, and evermore. Amen

Thursday Prayer 24th April 2025 at 10.30am

Focus: “Celebrating the Light of the World” – *Philip Baker*

Zoom connecting details and link:

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

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628

Passcode: 080127

Welcome to everyone taking part this morning, whether in the Cathedral or joining remotely via Zoom.

Introduction and opening prayers:

The theme for this morning is “Celebrating the Light of the World” and the reading is taken from the Gospel of Luke.

We gather our thoughts and start by praying for members and events in the diocese: For the Diocesan Spring Meeting tomorrow, for the Task Group Leaders reviewing their work during the year; for those recently Commissioned into their roles in the Diocesan Mothers’ Union and all who are working directly or indirectly towards achieving its aims. We give thanks for the work of the Branches whatever that might be. We give special thanks for our members around the world, all 4 million of us, who share the desire to improve the lives of others, through work with families and support of family life. Finally, we give thanks for Mary Sumner, a very special lady without whom our movement would not exist.

We say together – **Jesus Christ, Light of the World, we draw near to renew our light in you that our lives may brightly reflect your love. Loving Lord, inspire us with your vision for the part of your world you have called us to serve. Fix our gaze on Christ that we may brightly shine with the outworking of his love as we carry out your purposes. We celebrate the light of Christ which shines in the world with ever increasing glory as God’s Kingdom grows. Amen**

Reading: Luke 24: 36b-48 – Jesus appears to the Disciples (NIV)

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Reflection:

The reading from Luke we have just heard, apart from being a powerful story, also contains an instruction to us. First, the story: this was the second time that Jesus showed Himself as the risen Christ and it took place as the disciples were hearing about His first appearance on the road to Emmaus. This was the final proof that Jesus was God in fulfilment of the prophecies of the Scriptures, but it was a difficult story for the disciples to accept. Can you imagine what it must have been like – first their King was crucified and then, according to the women who found the empty tomb, Jesus had risen from the dead, as prophesied. Now, here He was among them, just as if nothing had happened. And yet they knew what had happened – they had experienced it all and this was impossible! How their senses must have been reeling under the strain of all the normally impossible things they were experiencing.

That's the story, and now the Instruction. Verses 45-47 state: "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."" So -"Repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations" – this was to be their job, to be witness to the truth of His Resurrection and to preach that Jesus is the Way to the Father in Heaven, and everlasting life through repentance.

So, what does all this have to do with the theme of our service today - "Jesus, Light of the World"? We find some help in Matthew 5:14-16. Talking about his disciples (the same disciples as we were thinking about just now), Jesus says "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." That is one of my favourite bible passages; it tells us that our duty is to illuminate others by the light of our faith shining from Jesus and reflected by us. To spread the Word of our Lord. Unless I am mistaken, this is the same instruction that we receive in the passage from Luke; as successors to the disciples who were with Jesus, we are to continue the work they were charged with and spread the Word of God, that through repentance of our sins we will, when it is time, find eternal peace with God.

Furthermore, we are not to be timid but we are to be visible, as by that means the Light of God, The Spirit, will shine and be seen by everyone around us. This is what we do as members of the Mothers' Union – we are visibly living out our lives as God intended, loving our God and loving our neighbours as ourselves. In Matthew 25:40 Jesus says "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me". *Amen*

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on
earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily
bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us. Lead us not into
temptation but deliver us from evil. For the
kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Surely the hymn today has to be "Shine Jesus Shine"

Hymn: Shine Jesus Shine

Lord, the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth You now bring us

Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy Send
forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence
From the shadows into Your radiance
By the blood, I may enter Your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness

Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy Send
forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light*

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness
Ever-changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here, may our lives tell Your story

Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy Send
forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light*

Songwriters: Graham Kendrick. For non-commercial use only

The Mothers' Union Prayer: We say together:

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen

From the Mothers' Union Prayer Diary

The theme of the month is "Love Blooms" We pray that the love you send us will be strong. May it blossom and radiate your love that blossoms in all. Heavenly Father, we come before you with hearts of gratitude and praise for the wondrous ways love blooms in our lives. In the gentle whispers of kindness, in the warmth of fellowship, and in the selfless acts of service, we see your love reflected. May we be vessels of your love, spreading kindness and compassion wherever we go. Amen

The Wave of Prayer for today is for: Kisangani in DR Congo; Kagera in Tanzania; Awka in Nigeria; Sunyani in Ghana; Manchester in England and Popondota in Papua New Guinea.

Our Intercessions:

We pray for:

The worldwide work of the Mothers' Union;

Our new Worldwide President Kathleen Snow;

The Chief Executive, Bev Jullien, and all who work at Mary Sumner House supporting members;

Our province of Canterbury and our new Provincial President Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our whole Diocese, for our Diocesan vice-presidents, Jean, Debbie and Hazel, for those on the Trustee Board and those leading branches, our deaneries, our chaplains and our members;

Our Worldwide Links: Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria, Karimnager in India;

The Diocese to Diocese Links: Kigali and Vellore.

And we also pray for:

Our own parishes in the Ely Diocese, our families, and our friends

Anyone known to us who is unwell or in need

Any who are finding it difficult to feel the love and support of the Christian Community, worldwide The many countries around the world experiencing conflict, oppression, natural disasters and anywhere where people live in fear or poverty.

The Mothers' Union Thursday Prayer, we say together:

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers, we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

God of forgiveness, we ask for your unfailing love to be with us today, so that we may reach out to others with love and compassion. Help us to seek peace and reconciliation with each other, and unite us as one family of God to your glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Grace

Thursday Prayers – 15th May 2025

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

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127

Today's Prayer

"Support us in our physical journey and help us to be examples of Faith and Integrity May others be drawn to you through our words and actions as we follow your example" Amen

Prayer

Gracious God, from love we are made and to love we shall return. May our love for one another kindle flames of joy and hope. May the light and warmth of your grace inspire us to follow the way of Jesus Christ and serve you in your Kingdom, now and for ever. Amen

Our Focus today is, "A New Commandment" John 13 vs 31-35

"When he had gone out Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and in him God is glorified."

"My children I am to be with you a little longer, then you will look for me and as I told the Jews I tell you now, where I am going you cannot come. I give you a **New Commandment**, love one another as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then everyone will know that you are my disciples".

The old commandment from Leviticus is to love our neighbours as our self. The new commandment from Jesus is to love even those who are not our neighbours. Tax collectors, Samaritans, prostitutes, the poor. Jesus loved lepers for example. He loved Peter who denied knowing him. He loved Judas who betrayed him, He loved Thomas who doubted him. He loved those who abandoned him and even those who crucified him. He considered them all his neighbours.

Our neighbour is anyone and everyone we have an opportunity to love. All deserving of our love, all loved by God. Jesus loved **unconditionally**. He teaches us to do the same.

It is important to remember exactly when and where Jesus was when he said these things. Sometimes when and where we say something is as important to the meaning, as what we say. And that is true of John 13.

It was Maundy Thursday and on that night Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples in the Upper Room and finally went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and prepare for the ordeal that was to come, He prayed "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup of suffering pass from me" This expresses Jesus' human struggle with the upcoming suffering and death, while acknowledging the possibility of the suffering being avoided, He was actively betrayed by Judas and abandoned by his other disciples, arrested and he ultimately submits to God's will. He was then taken before the Jewish authorities for a preliminary hearing and harsh abuse, which led up to his Roman trial and execution the

next day. At the Last Supper Jesus instituted the ordinance of the sacrament using the bread and wine already on the table, as a means for us to regularly remember and accept this saving sacrifice.

Jesus is there, in the Upper Room with all his Disciples Thomas who will doubt the resurrection, Peter who will deny knowing him after he is arrested and Judas who will betray him and hand him over to those wanting to kill him. After being betrayed abandoned, denied, misjudged and abused Jesus then carried this weight alone on the cross. And Jesus knowing all that is to come takes the role of a servant and washes the feet of all the Disciples. If you want a picture of love picture Jesus on his knees washing the feet of his betrayer Judas, knowing all that he knew. That is love. And Jesus tells us this is what we need to do for each other. "Love one another as he has loved us."

He says, "I give you a **new commandment** that you love one another just as I have loved you". We might wonder what is NEW about it.? The commandment to love was not new of course. It is mentioned often in the Old Testament. The new part of this is that we are commanded to love one another just as Jesus has loved us and that means loving those who doubt us and deny knowing us and even those who betray us. Because that's what Jesus did for us. He loved us and loves us, even when we doubt, deny, or betray him.

We have to try to love without expectation, not to mind feeling vulnerable and to love those who are not like us. As the new commandment from Jesus tells us to love even those who are not our neighbours.

Jesus did not say it would be easy, but it is certainly possible, otherwise he would not have commanded it. And it is exactly what he did. He is not asking us to do something he has not done already and done perfectly.

So let us pray for all persons in the World that they love one another until there is peace and everyone knows the love of Jesus. What a wonderful world that would be.

To the Glory of God, Amen

Prayer

Lord, let us serve your world with love and kindness as we follow the example of Christ. Help us to love unconditionally. To refrain from needless expectations: To be generous in acceptance: to be selfless in support: as Christ has loved and forgiven us. Gracious Lord, show us the way to serve one another with love and kindness. May we place the needs of our neighbours above our own as we mirror the example of Christ. Amen

Monthly Prayer

Lord as we gather in prayer across the world, we remember your plan of salvation where there are no barriers to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Come Holy Spirit as we pray "Thy Kingdom Come". Father, we pray that it will bring us closer within our worldwide family of Mothers' Union so that "Thy Kingdom Come" resounds around the corner and across the World. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in Heaven hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in Heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the Kingdom,
The Power and the Glory,
For ever and ever. Amen**

Intercessions

In our Intercessions today we pray for the Worldwide work of the Mothers' Union, our worldwide president Kathleen Snow and our Chief Executive Bev Julian and all who work at Mary Sumner house. Also our Province of Canterbury and its members and our new Provincial Present Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our Diocesan leaders, Jean, Debbie and Hazel and our Branch Leaders and their members throughout the Diocese.

Also all members of our Clergy..

We thank you for the members in our branches and the common concern for marriage and family life which binds us together. We pray that we will continue to enjoy each other's friendship, to work together in love and to encourage each other with the hope of Jesus Christ. We give thanks for the world and its beauty, and we remember before you those close to us who are ill or unwell and need our prayers.

Pause,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

We pray for all who are suffering from natural disasters, war, and famine caused particularly by climate change. The people of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and Myanmar and all conflicts around the world. As turmoil is so widespread we ask for your help for all those who are suffering. Particularly the children and young people and may all nations lay aside the ways of darkness and put on the armour of light.

We pray for our worldwide links, Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria, Karimnagar in India plus the diocesan links with Kigali and Vellore.

In our Wave of Prayer we pray for Maridi in South Sudan, Karinyaga in Kenya and Zaki-Biam and Ijesa in N.E. Nigeria and Waikato and Taranaki in New Zealand.

For our many Blessings

Mothers' Union Prayer

Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the World. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world in Jesus' name. AMEN

Hymn : Love Divine

Love Divine all loves excelling,
 Joy of Heaven to earth come down,
 Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
 All Thy faithful mercies crown;
 Jesus, thou art all compassion
 Pure, unbounded love thou art;
 Visit us with Thy salvation,
 Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe oh breathe thy loving spirit
 Into every troubled breast
 Let us all in thee inherit
 Let us find thy promised rest.
 Take away our love of sinning;
 Alpha and Omega be;
 End of faith as its beginning,
 Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver;
 Let us all thy grace receive;
 Suddenly return and never,
 Never more thy temples leave.
 Thee we would be always blessing,
 Serve thee as thy host above
 Pray and praise thee without ceasing,
 Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation;
 Pure and Spotless let us be;
 Let us see thy great salvation
 Perfectly restored in thee;
 Changed from Glory into Glory
 Till in heaven we take our place,
 Till we cast our crowns before Thee;
 Lost in wonder, love and praise!

Author Charles Wesley 1707 – 1788

Thursday Prayer: Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in the worldwide fellowship of Christians united in Prayer. Take our Prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power and use them in the causes of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Grace: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Thursday Prayer 19th June 2025 at 10.30am

Focus: “Putting On Christ” – led by Jean Webb

Zoom connecting details and link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8IuyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

MEETING ID: 852 0929 8628 & PASSCODE: 080127.

A warm welcome to everyone this morning; whether you are here in the Cathedral, or joining us remotely via Zoom. It is good to be with you, and for us to be worshipping together.

Introduction

The theme for this morning is “Putting On Christ”.

Today we celebrate The Feast of Corpus Christi, which is observed every year on the second Thursday after Pentecost. Corpus Christi - the Latin term that literally translates as the 'Body of Christ'. It is celebrated as the Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion.

Our **Opening Prayer** is adapted from the prayers for this month in our Prayer Diary, so let us say together –

Lord, we thank you for the gift of priests and those who lead us in Holy Communion.

Bless those who take communion to our indoor and sick members.

Give them wisdom strength and compassion; guide us to uplift them in prayer and with practical support. May their joy in the Lord inspire them in all that they do. Amen

Today's reading, from Galatians 3: 23-29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Reflection

I am going to begin by repeating part of that passage-

“For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through Faith, you who are baptised have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

God called Abraham and his Hebrew descendants in order to reveal himself to them. Yet in Christ, God has extended that revelation to all who believe, and have “clothed ourselves with Christ”. *What inspiring words!*

This also means that within God's family there is neither "slave nor free." Nearly every society in the world has had systems of classifying people by their social status. Things like our backgrounds, wealth, power and education have divided people ever since Adam and Eve fell into sin. In Christ, however, Christians don't look down on people from whom we differ. We don't see things like our socio-economic status, job titles or academic accomplishments as any reason to treat each other differently.

God's saving work in Jesus Christ also means that there is neither "male nor female." Here, the Apostle Paul insists that men and women are equal in God's eyes. An assertion, which even many people who are currently outside of God's family, would agree, was far ahead of its time. After all, men almost universally despised and often mistreated women in Paul's day

So in one sense is God colour and gender-blind? God sees each one of us, black and white, male and female, powerful and powerless, rich and poor, as naturally sinful. God sees every person, regardless of race, gender or social status, as in desperate need of God's grace.

It has been said that when God looks at people, God sees two colours. But they're not the colours we so often see. They're, instead, the colours of deep darkness and bright red. When God looks at people, God sees the colours of the spiritual darkness in which some choose to stubbornly live, and the red that is Christ's blood. God sees people who have either rejected God's grace or have let Christ's blood wash away our sins.

Christ's work doesn't obliterate racial, social and sexual distinctions. God's adopted sons and daughters aren't colour- and gender-blind in that sense that we ignore the colour of a person's skin or someone's gender. Christians don't overlook the real pain that society has historically attached to skin colour, gender and social status. Nor do we ignore the cultural backgrounds from which other Christians come. Instead *we treasure* these differences, cherishing the way our diversity enriches and enlivens the body of Jesus Christ, and therefore our lives.

The distinctions on which we so often focus do not erect barriers to Christian fellowship.

By God's grace God people resist the temptation to despise or look down on each other. After all, Christians recognize that those who have faithfully received God's grace are all "one." Because of what Christ has done, we recognize each other as equals, brothers and sisters, by God

As Mothers Union members we acknowledge our need to support *one another*, not just fellow Christians, but *all God's people*;, but especially those whose lives have met with adversity, the marginalised, the sick and disabled, the abused, the homeless, refugees, and many more, and we support with our projects and prayers, locally, nationally and worldwide.

In "Putting on Christ" we recognise we are Christ's hands here on earth.

(pause for thought)

Our hymn today sums up these thoughts so well

**In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.**

**In Him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord,
Close binding humankind.**

**Join hands, then, members of the faith,
Whatever your race may be!
Who serves My Father as His child
Is surely kin to Me.**

**In Christ now meet both East and West,
In Him meet North and South;
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.**

John Oxenham (1852-1941)

Intercessions

So let us pray for-

The worldwide work of the Mothers' Union;
Our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow; The Chief Executive, Bev Jullien, and all who work at Mary Sumner House supporting members. For Our province of Canterbury; our Provincial President Comfort Fearon; and our Zonal Trustee Julia Jameson.
For our Diocese of Ely, our Trustees, and Diocesan Vice-Presidents, our Treasurer and Diocesan Chaplain: for all our members, whether they meet in Branches or groups or are independent; and for those leading them.
For our Worldwide Links: Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria, Karimnagar in India; and Irene Porter our Worldwide Links Officer. Not forgetting the Diocese to Diocese Links with Kigali and Vellore.

Today in our Wave of Prayer we remember the diocese of –Rejaf in South Sudan, Episcopate in Kenya, Doko & Owo in Nigeria, Chelmsford in England and Jamaica & the Cayman Islands.

In a moment of silence let us pray for our families and friends; and for anyone known to us who is unwell or in need of our prayers

(pause)

Lord In your Mercy

Hear Our Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray –

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

As we recall today's theme of "Putting On Christ" we commit ourselves anew to be
Christ's hands here on earth, as we say **The Mothers' Union Prayer**,

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

**Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the
encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.**

**Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and
service, reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen**

And our Mothers' Union **Thursday Prayer-**

**Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of
Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers, we humbly ask, fill them with your
love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen**

Let us join hands and share the Grace with one another-

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the
Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore, Amen.**

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Thursday Prayers—17th July 2025.

Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am on 17th July & 21st August

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

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127

A warm welcome to everyone who is joining us today, whether you are near us in Ely Cathedral, or far away.

Our focus today is: Continuing in Faith.

We will start with today's prayer.

Lord give us faith to serve you as we follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before. May we continue to be a people who seek and follow your will, Lord, make us people of faith. May we continue to be a people who reach out to the world with your love. Lord, God of every generation, help us, in our time to continue the work of your great commission. To gladly share the love of Christ and to build your kingdom on earth. Amen.

Reading

A letter of Paul to the Colossians beginning at verse 15.

He is the image of the invisible God; his is the primacy over all created things. In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities and powers: the whole universe has been created through him and for him. And he exists before everything, and all things are held together in him. He is, moreover, the head of the body, the church. He is its origin, the first to return from the dead, to be in all things alone supreme. For in him the complete being of God; by God's own choice, came to dwell. Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross-to reconcile all things whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone.

Formerly you were yourselves estranged from God, you were his enemies in heart and mind, and your deeds were evil. But now by Christ's death in his body of flesh and blood, God has reconciled you to himself, so that he may present you before himself as dedicated men, without blemish and innocent in his sight. Only you must continue in your faith, firm on your foundations, never to be dislodged from the hope offered in the gospel which you heard.

This is the gospel which has been proclaimed in the whole creation under heaven; and I, Paul, have become its minister.

It is now my happiness to suffer for you. This is my way of helping to complete, in my human flesh, the full tale of Christ's afflictions still to be endured, for the sake of his body which is the church. I became its servant by virtue of the task and assigned to me by God for your benefit: to deliver his message in full; to announce the secret hidden for long ages and through many generations, but now disclosed to God's people, to whom it was his will to make it known-to make known how rich and glorious it is among all nations. The secret is this: Christ in you, the hope of a glory to come. He it is whom we proclaim. We admonish everyone without distinction, we instruct everyone in all the ways of wisdom, so as to present as each one of you as a mature member of Christ's body.

Reflection.

The passage from Saint Paul is telling us of the role of Jesus Christ. His Supremacy, His role as the image of God, the creator of all things.... And the reconciliator of all things to God through his blood. He is the one in whom all things hold together. God's purpose is to reconcile things to himself through Christ, making peace by the blood of his cross. In his letter, Paul says that Christ is the head of the church, it dwells in Him and the gospel and has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven.

We are reminded of this at our Eucharist service and in taking the body and the blood of Christ. Our prayers usually end by mentioning His name and our hopes that he hears us, not forgetting that we also mention the Father and the Holy Spirit.

This is one of Paul's greatest letters and yet was written to an unimportant town and its people. A volcanic area, but one of rich soil, good for pasture land, where sheep grazed and an area well known for the wool and cloth which came from there. The waters of the river Lycus and its tributaries contained chalk which solidified into remarkable grottoes and cascades and archways.

It is thought that Paul had never visited this land and its people.

The ending of our bible reading calls for believers to be established in faith, firmly rooted in the gospel and to persevere in hope. You can stand firm, Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance because of sharing His glory. The Jesus life style and our faith are simple! Would that be so easy?!

Follow Him, love others.....and see what happens.

We are 'called', how we operate is totally different and we need to have the freedom to choose how we operate. We are on a journey- who am I? what am I meant to be doing? And we are all at different stages on that journey. Talking to Mothers' Union members is easy- we are all on the same level, starting a conversation is not difficult and we seem to understand each otherbefore we even start.

How about those who are not always on the same wave length?

When I leave church on a Sunday, the coffee things put back in the cupboard, a menial task I have helped with finished, and I walk through the churchyard, I have often seen people I recognise and I am often asked what I have been doing. So, I tell them I have been to the service in church and sometimes I think I may be speaking to them in riddles. I don't think many really understand the things I am saying - you have to know how much to say! But I am trying to say something meaningful without saying too much!

Some people in Colosse believed that salvation was only for the elite but Paul declared that the all-sufficient Christ was for everyman!

One final thought: Remember you are loved, called and chosen- --and one last hope in following our Lord-----please do so by example.

The Monthly prayer which we can say together, which says a lot:

Father, open our eyes to see you as the way to live our lives. Open our hearts to be obedient to your calling and to follow your directions. How can we listen to your voice today and who can we invite to join in, to join up with the Mothers Union? Amen.

Intercessions.

Lord,

We pray for the work of the Mothers` Union, in our own Diocese of Ely and that worldwide. We pray for all in Mary Sumner House, our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow our Chief Executive Bev. Julian.

We pray for all members in the Province of Canterbury and our new Provincial President Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our Diocesan leaders, Jean, Debbie and Hazel and all our branch leaders and all our members.

In our prayers today, Lord, we pray for all who are suffering from natural disasters, war, and famine especially those particularly caused by climate change. We remember the people of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and Myanmar and Iran and all conflicts around the world and we ask for your help for all people who are suffering.

God of healing, restore us to wellness. Heal us from physical diseases. Relieve us from mental illness and emotional wounds. Protect us from selfishness and greed that threaten our spiritual well-being. Help us to make your love visible. Strengthen us to continue loving and supporting all who are in need. Lead us to treat others so that all people feel they are important, cared for and treasured.

Lord, in your Name. **Hear our prayers.**

We pray for our world wide links, Lusaka in Zambia, Shyoggwe in Rwanda, Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria, Karimnagar in India and our diocesan links with Kigali and Vellore.

Let us say together the Lords prayer.

**Our Father who art in Heaven hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in Heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the Kingdom,
The Power and the Glory
For ever and ever.
Amen.**

Let us stand, if we are able, and join together in singing: The Lord's my shepherd.
(Stuart Townsend)

**1. The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want,
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters.
His goodness restores my soul.**

**And I will trust in you alone,
For your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.**

**2. He guides my ways in righteousness,
And he anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.**

And I will trust in you alone.....

**3. And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For you are with me, and your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know:**

And I will trust in you alone....

If we can join together to say the Mothers' Union prayer.

Loving Lord, We thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us join in the Thursday Prayer.

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in the worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Grace.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

THURSDAY PRAYERS AUGUST 21st 2025

Zoom 10.30am 21st August

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

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127

Welcome to everyone here today in the Cathedral and to those joining us on Zoom.
Today we are focusing on “Mothers’ Union, working in Christ”

The Bible reading today is Hebrews 12 v18-29, reading from The Message.

Unlike your ancestors, you didn’t come to Mount Sinai—all that volcanic blaze and earthshaking rumble—to hear God speak. The earsplitting words and soul-shaking message terrified them and they begged him to stop. When they heard the words—“If an animal touches the Mountain, it’s as good as dead”—they were afraid to move. Even Moses was terrified.

No, that’s not *your* experience at all. You’ve come to Mount Zion, the city where the living God resides. The invisible Jerusalem is populated by throngs of festive angels and Christian citizens. It is the city where God is Judge, with judgments that make us just. You’ve come to Jesus, who presents us with a new covenant, a fresh charter from God. He is the Mediator of this covenant. The murder of Jesus, unlike Abel’s—a homicide that cried out for vengeance—became a proclamation of grace.

So don’t turn a deaf ear to these gracious words. If those who ignored earthly warnings didn’t get away with it, what will happen to us if we turn our backs on heavenly warnings? His voice that time shook the earth to its foundations; this time—he’s told us this quite plainly—he’ll also rock the heavens: “One last shaking, from top to bottom, stem to stern.” The phrase “one last shaking” means a thorough housecleaning, getting rid of all the historical and religious junk so that the unshakable essentials stand clear and uncluttered.

Do you see what we’ve got? An unshakable kingdom! And do you see how thankful we must be? Not only thankful, but brimming with worship, deeply reverent before God. For God is not an indifferent bystander. He’s actively cleaning house, torching all that needs to burn, and he won’t quit until it’s all cleansed. God himself is Fire!

PRAYER FOR TODAY

Heavenly Father, we bow down before you, and we recognise your power, your reign over everything that has existed and all that will be in the future. We glorify you today because you are the essence of our life, you are our understanding, our strength, love and our salvation. Heavenly Father, as we meet as members of Mothers’ Union, teach us to know how best to serve you, not just in the needs locally, but in those of the wider world. Fill us with your Spirit, that we may have the strength to follow your way. We pray with sure hope and assurance. Amen

REFLECTION

Mothers' Union, working in Christ, so much of our literature shows how we do Christ's work. On the front cover of the spring "Connected" magazine it says, "Stronger together, as God's hands and feet" Each issue is full of accounts of how we are working with Christ.

Our new Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow, tells us that Mothers' Union is a way of life for her, that her faith has grown through her membership and relationships with other members. This month we celebrate Mary Sumner Day. The reflection for August in our prayer diary reminds us that Mary Sumner left us with a model to follow, that we should touch as many lives as possible. We can be proud that we have built on her legacy and have achieved so much, in this country and across the world.

Mothers' Union, working in Christ's name to transform hard to reach communities, providing support for families, working towards freedom from violence, poverty and injustice. For those working in Christ, key Bible readings emphasize a heart-focused diligent approach to all tasks as serving the Lord, not human masters, and to do so with excellence and integrity knowing that labour in the Lord's name is not in vain.

Proverbs 3 v27; Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it is in your power to help them. Or, in the Message, Never walk away from someone who deserves help; your hand is God's hand for that person.

Ephesians 6 v6-7; Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you are working for the Lord rather than for people. The Message covers V5-8 ; Servants, respectfully obey your earthly masters but always with an eye to obeying the real master, Christ. Don't just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ's servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you're really serving God. Good work will get you good pay from the master, regardless of whether you are slave or free.

Bette Midler sang the song "From a distance" the lyrics include the voice and song of hope, the voice and song of love, the hope of hopes, the love of love, being a song for everyone and the reminder that God is watching us, from a distance. As Mothers' Union, we aim to bring that hope and love.

God may not be physically sitting in an office watching your every move, but he is the one you work for. Paul had this in mind when he said; "Whatever you do, work heartily for the Lord and not for men, you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ".

PRAYER

Let us say together, the prayer for August from our Prayer Diary.

Loving Lord, as we give you thanks for the vision of our founder as we celebrate her special day this month. Prayer is the foundation of Mothers' Union and we pray for the confidence and faithfulness to build on Mary Sumner's legacy and all that has been achieved so far. As we support one another through prayer, may we touch many lives for God through our prayer, our words and our actions. Amen

INTERCESSIONS

Father, we pray for the work of Mothers' Union, in the Diocese of Ely and our members throughout the world.

We pray for our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow, for her dedication to mothers' Union and for her travels around the world meeting members in so many countries.

We pray for everyone at Mary Sumner House and members in our Canterbury province. We pray especially for our Diocesan leaders, Hazel, Debbie and Jean, for our task group leaders and all our members in the Ely Diocese.

Lord, we pray for the families that have been or will be enjoying an AFIA holiday. God of love, friend to those who find life a struggle, help them to have courage to face the challenges life brings.

We pray for all who are suffering at this time, through disaster, wars and the effects of the weather, through illness or bereavement. We give thanks for those who have come through difficult times.

We give thanks for our links with Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria and Kirmnager in India, also our Diocesan links with Kigali and Vellore. We give thanks for the news we receive from them. We pray that you will be with them as they carry out your work in their countries. AMEN

THE LORDS PRAYER

Our Father who art in Heaven hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

SING

"Take my life and let it be"

Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise,

Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of Thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for Thee,

Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from Thee,

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect, and use
every power as Thou shalt choose,

Take my will, and make it Thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
take my heart; it is Thine own;
it shall be Thy royal throne,

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at Thy feet its treasure-store.
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for Thee.

MOTHERS' UNION PRAYER

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world in Jesus' name. Amen

THURSDAY PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in the worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power and use them in the cause of your glorious Kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

THE GRACE

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen

Mothers' Union Thursday Prayers, 18 September 2025

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luYyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127

Theme: Good Stewardship

Welcome everyone to our Thursday prayers, both here in person and on Zoom.

Introductory Prayer.

Lord, speak to us that we may hear your word.
Move among us that we may behold your glory.
Receive our prayers that we may learn to trust you. **Amen**

We say together the Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord,
We thank you for your love so freely given to us all
We pray for families around the world.
Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love
through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage
and family life.
Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship
and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.
In Jesus' name . Amen

and the Monthly Prayer

Father, as we seek to follow your Son, help us to be always aware of
how our actions and words affect others and the world around us.
Give us grace to be peacemakers among people, and good stewards
of your creation. Amen

Our Reading Today is taken from the gospel of Luke 16:1-13, using the New Living translation

16 Jesus told this story to his disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money. ² So the employer called him in and said, 'What's this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.'

³ "The manager thought to himself, 'Now what? My boss has fired me. I don't have the strength to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. ⁴ Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired.'

⁵ "So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe him?' ⁶ The man replied, 'I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.' So the manager told him, 'Take the bill and quickly change it to 400 gallons.'^[a]

⁷ "And how much do you owe my employer?' he asked the next man. 'I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat,' was the reply. 'Here,' the manager said, 'take the bill and change it to 800 bushels.'^[b]

⁸ "The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light. ⁹ Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.'^[c]

¹⁰ "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. ¹¹ And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? ¹² And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?

¹³ "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money."

This morning our Reflection is entitled ‘Good Stewardship’

Thursday Prayer

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in the worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers, we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

In our Intercessions today we pray for –

the worldwide work of the Mothers’ Union and our worldwide president Kathleen Snow; for all who work in Mary Sumner House, and all members in our province of Canterbury. For our Diocesan leaders Hazel, Debbie and Jean, for all our Trustees and task group leaders, and for all MU members and clergy within the Ely Diocese.

In our Worldwide Links of the Mothers’ Union we pray for:- Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnager in India; plus diocese to diocese with Kigali and Velore.

Our Wave of Prayer today is for Buye in Burundi; Sebei in Uganda; Abakaliki and Ekiti-Oke in Nigeria; Southwell and Nottingham in England; and Belize.

We give thanks for the sacrificial love of Christ with deeply grateful hearts.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the joy, peace, help and blessings that you give to us each day.

Thank you for this wondrous world filled with all the wonderful gifts you have given to us.

Thank you for our families, friends and the fellowship of your Church. Help us to be mindful and hold in prayer before you:

those who do not yet know the love of Christ;

those whose lives today will be a struggle to feel joy, find peace, seek or engage with help;

those whose lives do not feel blessed;

those who cannot see beyond the shadows and darkness of unhappiness, hunger, loneliness, isolation, poverty, fear, trauma, oppression, conflict, to see the beauty and wonder of the world you have created for us;

for those who are separated from families and friends;

for those who feel unable or unwelcome to share the fellowship of your church;

and anyone known to us who is ill or unwell, in situations that need our prayers. **Pause**

Lord, we thank you for the privilege of being peacemakers. In spreading your love, may joy abound, healing hearts and reconciling souls. Show us how we can be agents of peace for you in our communities. **Amen**

And we thank you for the most wondrous gift of all – the forgiveness of our sins, bought for us by the love of your most blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

We say together in confidence, The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father Who art in Heaven

Hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come;

Thy will be done;

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us,

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

The power and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen

Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7

All Stand for our Hymn: O Jesus, I have promised

O Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me,
my master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel thee near me;
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak and make me listen,
thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised,
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;

and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow
my master and my friend.

O let me see thy footmarks,
and in them plant my own;
my hope to follow duly
is in thy strength alone;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my friend!

Almighty God, we thank you for the gift of your holy word. May it be a lantern to our feet, a light to our paths, and strength to our lives. Take us and use us to love and serve all people in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An Australian Prayer Book

All say The Mary Sumner Prayer together:

All this day O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee, and every life I touch. Do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live. Amen

May the blessing of God strengthen and encourage us as we go from here to live lives of gratitude and service. Amen

All Stand and say the Grace together:

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more.
Amen

Mothers' Union Thursday Prayers, 16 October 2025

Zoom Details 10.30am

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDlK.1>

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127

Theme: Prayers during the Week of Prayer for World Peace

Welcome everyone to our Thursday prayers, both here in person and on Zoom.

Introduction: We meet to pray for peace during the 51st Week of Prayer for World Peace. Many of the prayers today come from the Prayer Resource you are receiving today and for those not here, I will display the email to order one at the end.

Introductory Prayer.

Lord, if there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in nations, cities, neighbours and there must be peace in our homes. Remind us always that real peace begins with ourselves and then we must pass it on. Amen

We say together the Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name . Amen

Our monthly prayer

Father, as we seek to follow your Son, help us to be always aware of how our actions and words affect others and the world around us.

Give us grace to be peacemakers among people, and good stewards of your creation. Amen

No one can miss the horrors that are taking place in so many regions of the world. We now offer a Prayer for World Leaders

God of history, we yearn for true leadership. For men and women of inspiration and insight, visionaries to build nations and communities in Your image. Stewards dedicated to justice, unafraid to face the challenges of our day, so that our cities and countries resonate with compassion and health, justice and mercy, kindness and peace. Bless our leaders with dedication and foresight, fortitude and imagination to solve the complex issues that threaten our future. May they lead us to a time when neighbours embrace, and the communities thrive. A time liberty and equality reign supreme. Amen

Our readings are:

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?" - Micah 6:8

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" Romans 15:13

Reflection:

This year we are seeing many anniversaries notably the 80 anniversary of the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the ending of World War 2. There are also some really positive 80th anniversaries including the founding of Christian Aid and Pax Christi. Today we want to remember the founding of the United Nations. More anon.

Just over half a century ago, leaders from various faiths joined together and wrote: "In the turmoil of a world increasingly dominated by violence and characterised by bewilderment and confusion created by the apparent impotence of humankind to alleviate suffering caused by injustice except by more recourse to violence, it seems to us that an unprecedented spiritual initiative is urgently required. We therefore wish to commend the idea of the World Week of Prayer for Peace." Sadly, those words apply more today than ever.

Like many of you, there have been times lately I have stopped listening to the news or at least shut my eyes to pictures of more injured children etc. It is easy to give up hope that things will change. But as Christians one of our attributes is 'to be hopeful'. Just think of all the times the word 'hope' appears in the Bible. It is not easy. When I get discouraged, I remember the story of the 'Starfish'.

A man was walking along a beach where hundreds of starfish had been left stranded. As he walked, he would pick up one and throw it back into the sea. Two men coming from the other direction stopped and asked him if he thought he could save all the starfish? No, he said, but I can save this one, as he tossed it back into the water.

What does this modern parable say to me? No, we cannot change everything, but all of us know there are things we can do that make a difference. Along with practical things we can also pray for peace. The Prayer Resource you receive today is meant not just for this week but for the whole year and I hope you can share it with others.

Now that other 80th anniversary – the founding of the United Nations. Some of you would have been children in 1945 many of us were not yet born. But 50 nations, representing 90% of the world's population, gathered in San Francisco to agree a treaty that would enshrine the rights of individuals and maintain peace.

The Charter agreed by all 50 nations begins: 'We the people of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war that twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind'. Then President Truman spoke saying "Many doubted that agreement could be reached from people from such different races, religions, cultures and languages. But these were forgotten in one unshakable determination to end war!"

We know woefully that that goal has not been achieved. However, we look to the hopes of those 80 years ago and pray that their high hopes might still be achieved.

Now our intercessions:

We pray for those places in the midst of violent conflict. We cry out to you in lament at the devastation caused by war. Would those suffering from grief, displacement, hunger or fear know your presence with them. Make us, your Church, a reconciling presence, ministering to those in need and bridging divides.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for leaders, around the world and close to home, with the influence to shape conflicts. Would you give them wisdom and compassion in their decisions, and the courage to use their power for peace. Strengthen the resolve of all nations to work for the common good.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for the work of Mothers' Union, in the Diocese of Ely and our members throughout the world.

We pray for our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow, for her dedication to mothers' Union and for her travels around the world meeting members in so many countries.

We pray for everyone at Mary Sumner House and members in our Canterbury Province.

We pray especially for our Diocesan leaders, Hazel, Debbie and Jean, for our task group leaders and all our members in the Ely Diocese.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We give thanks for our links with Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria and Karimnagar in India, also our Diocesan links with Kigali and Vellore. We also pray for MU members in countries of conflict especially remembering Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo where they are striving to alleviate suffering.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Our hymn today is For the Healing of the Nations

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us, Father, into freedom,
from despair your world release;
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned;
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.

You, creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness

bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.
Fred Kaan

From our Prayer Diary for 16 October

Sustainer God, we give thanks that you walk with us, day in, day out. Thank you for the many Mothers' Union ministries sharing your good news around the globe. Help us to celebrate these good news stories. Amen

Today I offer an **adapted Lord's Prayer**

Our God, the bread of life, whose heaven is in feeding the creation, your name now is unhallowed as people are dying of famine and living in starvation, your kingdom will only come when there is peace, justice and equal food for all.
How on earth can your will be done as it is in heaven, when the aid is reaching so few?
Give the hungry their daily bread as we fast for all who are starving.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into the temptation of either seeking revenge or staying neutral in the face of injustice,
But deliver us to share our bread and lives by standing up for the cause of just peace.
Yours is the kingdom of justice, where wars and conflict come to an end,
Yours is the power of love, where the hungry are fed, and the wounded are healed
Yours is the glory, where heaven and earth meet as righteousness and peace kiss each other,
For now, for here and for ever and ever.
Amen

And finally, along with **the Grace**, we say the International Prayer for Peace

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth
Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace
Let peace fill our hearts our world our universe. Amen

Mothers' Union Thursday Prayers 27th November, 2025

Refuges

Zoom Details: 10.30am Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127

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

Welcome to the Mothers' Union November Thursday Prayers which have the theme "refuges"

Introduction: We meet to pray for refuges, both physical and spiritual, in our world and in our hearts.

We begin with a prayer and then we will sing our hymn. Please join in the words in **BOLD**

November's Thursday Prayer

Lord, we come to you today to remember those in the community, local and worldwide, homeless or abused by loved ones. We pray that they will find peace and comfort in the places they now call home. We pray that the material gifts that are collected may help them in realising there is love and goodness in the world today. We pray all the residents will grow towards a positive hope for their future. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

HYMN – (George Herbert 1593-1632)

**Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.**

**The heavens are not too high, His praise may thither fly,
The earth is not too low, His praises there may grow.**

**Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.**

**Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.**

**The Church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out;
But above all the heart
Must bear the longest part.**

**Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.**

Reading: 1 John 3. 16-18 (New English Bible)

16. God loved the world so much he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life.

17. It was not to judge the world that God sent his Son into the world, but that through him the world might be saved.

18. The man who puts his trust in Him does not come under judgement but the unbeliever has already been judged in that he has not given his allegiance to God's only Son.

TALK:

Today, to take refuge is to find a safe place. You might take refuge under a bridge in a hail storm, or in a basement during a tornado. Refuge comes from a French word (se réfugier dans) derived from Latin meaning "to flee," and, in most cases, a refuge is a place to flee to in order to get away from people or places that are unsafe.

What is the meaning of refuge in the Bible?

In the Bible, "refuge" signifies a place of safety and protection, both physically and spiritually. It is most often used to describe God as a shelter and protector from danger, trouble, and anxiety. Many biblical passages, especially in the Psalms, refer to God as a "refuge" or "shelter" and an "ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). The term refuge is linked to God's strength, security, and ability to provide ultimate safety in a world filled with threats, both physical and spiritual. In a deeper sense, God is also seen as a refuge from the consequences of sin, offering forgiveness and protection from judgment.

The concept of "Refuge" is also represented by physical places like the Old Testament description of six Cities of Refuge where those who had accidentally killed someone could flee to escape revenge. These cities symbolized God's mercy and justice, providing a safe place to go until their case could be resolved. The Bible also uses other physical imagery for refuge, such as a fortress, tower, or a secure dwelling, to represent the protection God offers.

The history of "refuge" has evolved significantly, from those ancient "cities of refuge" and 19th-century institutions for women in "sinful circumstances" to the modern concept of a safe house, which began in 1971 with the opening of the first refuge for women and children fleeing domestic violence. The modern refuge movement was a product of the women's liberation movement, and the UK charity Refuge <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refugee> was founded in 1971 to provide these services. More recently, "refugee history" has focused on the study of forced migration and asylum policies, which gained momentum in the 20th century, especially after World War II. They also symbolized Christ as a spiritual refuge in Christianity.

In our area we have:

Fenland refuge, Mid Cambs. refuge, Whitworth House for young women, Cambs. Woman's aid and Wheatsheaf Close for young people, in addition to Mary's Child. If you have seen the most recent Diocesan newsletter there is a wish list together with contacts for each of these. Our Cathedral Mother's Union event in December is a fundraiser for some of them.

Sometimes we need a refuge of our own, just for a while. My research suggested your refuge space should feel like a warm hug. Think cozy blankets, a favourite chair, or maybe a soft rug that feels good under your feet. You want a place where you can sink in and just relax, whether you're reading a book, meditating, or just taking a quiet moment to yourself. Here is an alternative picture for us as Christians: in times of troubles, large or small, we are all spiritual refugees who seek refuge in our Lord Jesus. We flee to Him. We assess the troubles and craziness of our lives and say, "to God we go!" Our Lord offers rest and safety in himself for all who would come.

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

WE PRAY TOGETHER

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Let us join in the MU NOVEMBER MIDDAY PRAYER on the theme of
Spreading our wings*

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.”

Isiah 40: 31

Restore our faith in your eternal purposes; renew in us the hope that never fails; lift our eyes to the things that are unseen and eternal; that we may discern and embrace the new things that you have prepared for us. In Chris’s name. Amen

From the MU Prayer Diary for this month – the theme is “Spreading our wings” and links with the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. The prayer for each day looks at a different aspect of this issue.

This Thursday’s prayer.

Lord, we pray for young teenagers forced into child marriages, especially considering their consequent high risk of abuse. We pray that our work, through Mothers’ Union members, will continue to bear fruit as we work to protect the most vulnerable in society.

IN OUR INTERSESSIONS;

We pray for:

- The worldwide work of the Mothers’ Union;
- Kathleen Snow our Worldwide President;
- Our Chief Executive, Bev Jullien; All who work in Mary Sumner House;
- Our Diocesan President Hazel Williams and Trustees; the Task Group Leaders in: Faith in Action, Praying our Faith, Finance & Administration, and Communications;
- Our province of Canterbury and Kathryn Anderson, our Provincial President.
- Our Worldwide Links: Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnagar in India; Plus the Diocesan Links with Kigali & Vellore.

Lord, we pray for Mothers’ Union worldwide, in the

WAVE OF PRAYER: Zululand in South Africa; Lodwar in Kenya; Isiala Ngwa South in Nigeria; Accra in Ghana; Bangor in Wales and Colombo in Sri Lanka.

We also pray:

- For the King and the Royal family, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, all those in government, and all MPs.
- For the family of the Bev Sweet: may she rest in peace and rise in glory.
- For our local parishes, our families, and our friends, and give thanks for our many blessings.
- For anyone known to us who is in need or unwell.
- For all in Local Government, in the Health Service, Emergency Services, and Transport and Travel Industry; those in Education, especially remembering children and young people.
- For the many countries around the world where there are troubles and people are suffering.

Reflective prayer

God be in my head, and in my understanding;

God be in my eyes, and in my looking;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking;

God be at mine end, and at my departing. **Amen**

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

WE SAY TOGETHER:

MOTHERS' UNION PRAYER.

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

WE SAY THE GRACE TOGETHER

May The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Ely Cathedral Prayers 11th December 2025

ZOOM DETAILS: 10.30am MEETING ID: 852 0929 8628 PASSCODE 080127
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8IuyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

Good morning and welcome to our prayer time today.

Let us begin by saying The Mothers' Union Prayer together:

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus', name. Amen

The theme for this month's Thursday Prayers is Patience.

Reading: James 5: 7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.^[a] ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Reflection

In the reading we are told to think of the farmer who has to be patient and wait for the appropriate conditions to achieve the growth of his crop. Nothing he can do will speed the process it will happen in due time and however frustrating it may be no amount of pacing or grumbling will change matters.

Patience is a virtue we are told and it is sometimes very difficult to be patient. I recently broke my ankle and have found the time of healing very hard to come to terms with. However, it made me realise what being patient means. In fact, I think that having to actually stop and not be able to drive, walk without aids and carry out my usual duties in the Parish, have made me take stock. It has also helped me to empathise with others who have difficulty accessing things that I have previously taken for granted. I was fortunate to be able to borrow a wheelchair, however I noticed that everyone began to speak to me very kindly, but very slowly or they addressed my husband. I do not criticise their thoughtfulness and their well-meaning, but it made me wonder if I was guilty of assumptions about people. However, they were never impatient towards me, for which I was very grateful and, in the hustle and bustle of everyday life their patience was to be applauded.

Advent is a time of reflection and patience leading to the birth of Christ and all the celebration that comes with the Christmas season. It is so hard for children to be patient, as Christmas approaches, when decorations appear what seems earlier and earlier each year. Advertisements appear on television for the latest toy or electronic device. As a child I remember that Christmas cards and decorations did not appear until after Bonfire Night, now you are lucky if they are not available by the beginning of September, in fact I believe I received my Mothers' Union Catalogue including Christmas cards in mid to late August.

There is a certain pleasure in waiting for something, as the anticipation gives an additional joy. Saving up for something not only brings satisfaction as you reach your goal, it also gives you an extra feeling of achievement. If it is something for yourself, you also seem to value it more. Nothing that comes easily ever seems as valuable or worthwhile, which is where patience comes in.

Two of those, in the Bible, who chose incredible patience were Anna and Simeon who waited patiently for the coming of the Messiah and when at long last they saw Jesus in the Temple, they could die in peace. They had waited patiently knowing that the Lord would keep his promise however long it takes.

“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him”. Psalm 37 verse 7. Let us try during this Advent not to rush around being caught up in hectic preparations for Christmas, running from shop to shop losing the real purpose. Let us try to remember those who are lonely and who find Christmas difficult, because they have suffered a loss at this time of the year, for those less financially able who find this a challenging time, or for those who are struggling to manage physically and therefore cannot attend services or have a family celebration. Let us hold them in our prayers and maybe send a card or offer transport or other support. May we not forget what we are preparing to celebrate, that a baby was born in humble circumstances to an unworldly young woman in the most basic of environments and yet changed the World. Let us patiently reflect during this Advent, so that we can rejoice when Christmas arrives.

Let us pray

God of hope be with us in our Advent journey to the stable and beyond, be with us in our meeting and in our travelling together, be with us in our worship and our praying together, be with us in our Advent journey to the stable and beyond, our God of hope.
Amen

Lord, as we prepare for your coming at Bethlehem, we watch with patience. As the Word became flesh and lived and moved among us, so we search for you, that in finding you we may respond with hearts and minds to that Love, born of Mary; to the Word made flesh, swelling in us, so that we may dwell in him. **Amen**
From “The Little Book of Advent”

God our saviour and our redeemer, whose coming birth still shakes the foundations of our world, may your coming fill us with such excitement and hope that we embrace without fear the labour pangs of a new time, a new earth through Jesus Christ. **Amen**
From MU “The Prayers we breathe”

Lord, we watch and wait for your reign of peace.

We pray for Jerusalem and the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and all the conflicts around the world. As the world is in such turmoil, we ask for your help for those who are suffering. We particularly hold before you the children and young people, who have seen such atrocities. May they reach safety and find the love and support that they need. May all nations lay aside the ways of darkness and put on the armour of light.
Amen

We pray for those who are sick, particularly those who are lonely, despairing and struggling to survive in the present economic climate. May they feel the support from our prayers and the knowledge that they are not alone and they are valued. **Amen**

Our heavenly Father, as once again we prepare for Christmas, help us to find time our busy lives for quiet and thought and prayer; that we may reflect upon the wonder of your love and allow the story of the Saviour's birth to penetrate our hearts and minds.

So may our joy be deeper, our worship more real, and our lives worthier of all that you have done for us through the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

We will have a moment of silence to focus on our own prayers.

We now sing the hymn: **Hark the glad sound.**

1. Hark, the glad sound! the saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long;
let every heart prepare a throne
and every voice a song.
2. On him the Holy Spirit pours
the promised sacred fire;
his power and wisdom, zeal and love
the anointed Son inspire.
3. He comes the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.
4. He comes to cleanse the human mind
from thickest scales of sin,
and by the entrance of his words
give light and life within.
5. He comes the broken heart to bind,
the wounded soul to heal,
and in his gospel to the poor
God's riches to reveal.

P. Doddridge, 1702-51

Melody from Ravenscroft's Psalter, 1621

From the MU Annual Prayer Diary for December

Gracious God, we gladly accept and give thanks for your invitation to venture with you through this season of Advent. As we await in anticipation the promises foretold by the prophets "behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son", may we be ready at his birth, to recognize the gift of your Son and be well prepared to love and serve him. **Amen**

From our Prayer Diary for the 11th of "December.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your mind in Christ Jesus." **Amen**

Philippians 4: 6-7

Our Intercessions - We pray for:

The worldwide work of the Mothers Union, our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow. For all those who work at Mary Sumner House, supporting members.

Our province of Canterbury and all the members of the Canterbury Province and our Provincial President Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our whole Diocese, for our Diocesan Vice Presidents, Hazel, Jean and Debbie for those on the Trustee Board and those leading branches, those working in the Task groups, our deaneries, our chaplains and our members. We pray for events being held in the parishes.

In the Wave of Prayer: 10 – 12 December

Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria; Ely in England and Karimnagar in India.

Let us say together The Mothers' Union Thursday prayer:

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers, we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Before we say the Grace, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year and thank you for your friendship and fellowship throughout the year.

Let us say together **The Grace**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen**