

**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

# NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

VIGIL AND SILENCE AT ELY CATHEDRAL

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE



Around two dozen Mothers' Union Members from branches across Ely Diocese, met for a silent 30 minute vigil and prayers inside the cathedral, before assembling outside the main doors for the one-minute's silence at exactly 1.03pm the time reflecting the 1 in 3 statistic of women experiencing abuse. The event at Ely Cathedral was part of the **#Nomore1in3** campaign drawing attention to the shocking statistic that worldwide one woman in every three suffers some form of abuse.

Many churches across the diocese have displays on the theme of Domestic Abuse including the Rise Up campaign which gives information and help and the Red Chair Project that raises awareness too.

Photographs of other displays from around our diocese are on other pages



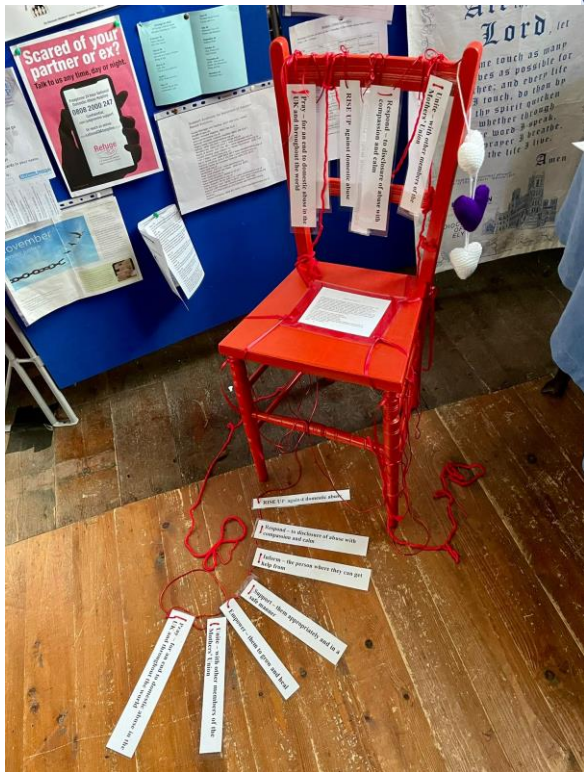
## St. George's MU Branch Littleport

The knitted purple hearts and the white punched hearts were made by members Maureen Frost and Pat Bridgestock, then strung together. They were given to each member with a prayer as a focus for No More 1 in 3.

Our display for 16 Days of Activism against gender violence featuring 'the Red Chair' and RISE UP was produced by Julianne Long.



Dear Lord  
May God give us eyes to recognise abuse where it exists.  
May God give us a heart to reach out in compassion.  
May God bless you and nurture your head, heart and hands,  
as we invite God to guide and comfort us as He gently directs our paths.  
Amen.  
Source unknown, adapted for 'Equipping The Church to take Action to End Domestic Abuse', 2022.



### From St. Peters' Church Yaxley with short quotes from Domestic Abuse Survivors on the 'Souls of their Shoes'



## St. Mary's Church, Burwell

**The Red Chair Project** is a campaign that runs each year during the UN's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. It involves reserving an empty chair in a public place, alongside information about domestic abuse and violence against women. The empty chair acts as a powerful symbol of the many women who've been killed through gender-based violence - women who should still be with us today.





**Stapleford Branch** collected toiletries for the Cambridge Women's Refuge in support of the Campaign Against Domestic Violence. As usual, the church and parish were very generous with their donations; the photo shows all the bags and boxes full of useful things such as toothpaste, shampoo, soap and so on. Maureen Haigh kindly collected them to pass on to the Refuge.



### Trumpington Church

The Mothers' Union Prayer Tree for the 16 Days of Activism. Della used the bookmarks which were sent to us with our original information from Mary Sumner House.

### Elisabeth Moule

I am very sad to inform you that Elisabeth Moule has died. She was a member of All Saints Church Milton all of her life and a loyal and devoted member of the Mothers' Union. For the last five years she was chairperson of the branch.

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on Zoom  
10.30am on December 21<sup>st</sup>.**

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

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

### WORLDWIDE LINK

#### Wave of Prayer.

Hopefully you are all getting organized for our Wave of Prayer, 10th to 12th December and have found the prayer notes helpful. I am aware that some branches are needing to move to a more convenient time slot, please feel free to meet at a suitable time for your branch. Perhaps during the three days, the map page in your prayer diary could be left open to remind you to think about and pray for our link Diocese whenever you walk past. This would help fill some of the gaps between the branch meetings.

Irene Porter

## Faith In Action

Jean Webb – Task Group Leader

### Afia.

I'm very pleased that we have been given £4,000 from the Diocesan Welfare Fund.

We have 1 application for a holiday next year.

### Refuges and hostels

Good support so far from branches for our Christmas Giving.

### Whitworth Trust

Jo is collecting vouchers for each resident.

### Mary's Child

Esther and Heidi (administrator) have both sent their thanks for recent delivery of items, particularly Christmas boxes. Storage for everyday items is becoming difficult, so they are going to be more selective about what clothing they store.

Rev. Carol has health issues, so how this will affect the work of Mary's Child is not yet known.

### 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

The Cathedral display has been attracting attention, and I am "pleased" that 2 of the tear off strips have been removed. (Poster about seeking help). I very much hope that branches have been actively finding venues for these posters.

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A reminder to all branches that the **subs for next year are £23** which is the national subscription and will all go to Mary Sumner House. There will be no Diocesan subscription again this year because we are able to cover our expenditure. Diocesan members will receive a communication from Debbie and those who pay by standing order will need to change it.

Anyone who has read the Christmas Appeal information or the resources for 16 Days of Activism will have seen that the work the MU carries out is invaluable. There is so much needed worldwide, particularly to help support women so that they can be an active part of their communities. I never cease to be amazed at the changes being literate and numerate make to the life of whole families and communities, not just to one person.

Thank you to all of you who continue to support the work of the Mothers' Union in so many ways.

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

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

One is from October which was delayed due to a technical issue with the Zoom recording, so Sue has re-recorded the prayers for that month with the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

**OCTOBER THURSDAY PRAYER** led by Sue Claydon during the Week of Prayer for World Peace. "Dreams? Or Praying with Hope in a Troubled World?"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_bNOK-mdhM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_bNOK-mdhM)



The link for the hymn can be watched here as there is no music included in the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8eorCEMIK4>

*“Make me a channel of your peace”*

The other is from **NOVEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER** led by Debbie Tye on “Being Prepared”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2oPffNLOQY>

## **DIOCESAN MEMBERS’ LUNCH.**

Diocesan Members, Trustees and Officers enjoyed a lovely lunch at the Ely City Golf Club, which was a new venue for us to go to. We enjoyed a 2-course lunch of chicken breast and winter berry crumble. We were pleased to welcome Sue Claydon from March who spoke about “A view of women’s lives in Africa today”, together with a slide presentation. She also brought some craft items from her visits to Africa. Afterwards there was a talk from Beth Georgiou about her work with the Anna Chaplaincy, which offers spiritual care to people in later life. Hazel Williams gave us an update about latest MU News. The raffle raised £52 which will go towards AFIA (Away From It All Holidays). It was great to be able to gather together again and enjoy good food and fellowship.



## A REFLECTION

*Philip Baker*

As I write these thoughts I am also making plans for Christmas, a time for families to gather together and enjoy the celebrations of the birth of our saviour, Jesus Christ. Jesus taught about love and peace, of how we interface with our neighbours and help them through hard times. Sadly, the world we live in is not all that much like that. We see troubles and friction everywhere.

From the interconnected world of the Mothers' Union we know how so many of our sisters and brothers are unable to have the sort of Christmas that Jesus would have wanted for us and that so many of us, the more fortunate ones, can actually experience. The work of the Mothers' Union, assisted by things we do in this country in our Branches and through our subscriptions and other gifts, helps people around the world to achieve the basics of life. I for one am proud that what we do makes life better for others.

For most of us the outcome of what we do is so remote that we do not consider it. We pray, but do not see the result. We give little gifts for the children of prisoners, but do not see their faces. We send items or messages to our link parishes, but do not have experience of their lives and difficulties. But it all makes a difference, possibly small, sometimes huge, but always unseen by us. However, it is seen and felt and appreciated by those receiving the outcome of the prayer, the gift, the message. There are people who, but for what our members do, supported by our work from afar, may not even be alive today. We are all part of the movement, founded by Mary Sumner, inspired by our God, reaching out as His hands across the world, as our special prayer says.

I do not say this very often, so make the most of it. This Christmas as you think of gifts given and received, remember those members of the Mothers' Union who have benefited from our activity. Be my guest to feel a warm glow, for you deserve it!

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## Burwell Branch



Some of the members at our branch meeting with the small knitted stockings containing sweets ready to be delivered to children when they visit Whitemoor Prison.

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I could not resist this photo taken at the Diocesan Lunch wearing a hat from Sue Claydon's display from her travels in Africa. My best wishes go to everyone for a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.      Hazel