



February Newsletter 2023

WORLDWIDE NEWS



NEWS FROM LUSAKA

Members in Lusaka have been giving a "Bag of Support" to mothers at a clinic. Echoes the gifts we collect for our local women's refuges.

"16 DAYS"

Members of Kigali Diocese in Rwanda took part in the "16 Days of action against gender-based violence", with many women attending a rally. Their theme was Galatians 6.2 "Carry one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfil the love of Christ".



THURSDAY PRAYER in the
Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am
February 16th Theme: Chose Life

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

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

ADVANCE DATES

MU Quiet Day – 28th March at St. Peter's Church Yaxley. (full details in next newsletter)

MU Diocesan Meeting and AGM– April (date and venue to be confirmed).

MU Diocesan Garden Party – 14th July 2-5pm in Bishop Stephen's Garden, Ely.

MU Annual Gathering – 22nd September in York (Tickets are free but must be ordered by contacting Ros, by the end of March, who will then send for a batch so that we can sit together).

Lady Day – 25th March. Please send details of any Branch or Deanery services to Hazel by 25th February.

Ely Cathedral Branch

Gail Swanson

Ely Cathedral Mothers' Union gathered on Sunday 11th December between 3pm and 4pm, to hold a Wave of Prayer member-led service. Although there were only seven of us as it was an awful day weather wise!

We had a very special time and met to pray, sing hymns and light candles for our Diocesan Links in Zambia, Rwanda and Nigeria, and Karimnagar and Vellore in India, also for our own Ely Diocese. Our Wave of Prayer is a continuous expression of our commitment in prayer to each other around the World. The photograph shows gifts representing the different countries that were placed on a table: coffee from Ethiopia in Africa, tea from India, and an assortment of tropical fruits. Sadly, you cannot hear the African Youth Choir of Nairobi singing in the background!



Sawston Branch news

Janet Martin

Sawston Branch gathered for the Wave of prayer in December and we also had a good number at the Deanery Advent service at Balsham this week. The Posada is progressing around the village and people are really enjoying having it and passing it on to the next household.

From Irene Porter, Worldwide Officer

In early December we took part in the Wave of Prayer, it would be helpful to know how each branch found the experience.

- * Did you meet in church or a member's house?*
- * Was your time slot convenient?*
- * How helpful were the prayer notes?*
- * Have you any suggestions for the next wave of prayer?*

Please email me your thoughts and comments

irene.portermu@gmail.com

News from The Anglesey Group Branch

Ann Langran



Our first meeting of 2023 was a combined Holy Communion Service with the regular weekly service at St. James' Church, Lode. This also coincided with Revd. Sue Giles' last service in Lode before her retirement. During the service Revd. Sue enrolled new member Maggie Field. After the service Mothers' Union provided a soup lunch for approximately

30 of the congregation to celebrate Revd Sue's retirement and thank her for all her hard work in the benefice over the past 10 years. We are sad to see Sue leave, not only as our vicar, but also a fellow MU member. We wish her and husband Jonathan a happy retirement in York!!

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS.

Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

We have two new YouTube video links to share with you for **DECEMBER AND JANUARY THURSDAY PRAYER.**

December 2022: "Peace" led by Sue Claydon. YouTube Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u3fZTa373U>

January 2023: "Transformation – Now!" led by Hazel Williams. YouTube Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYxPNy72kGs>

JUNE PAYNE.

Many of you will remember June, and especially her reaching 70 years of MU Membership in 2022 and being presented with a certificate at the AGM in April. We are sad to inform you that she passed away peacefully on 29th December, aged 93.

June was born in March in 1929, and married Jim in 1951 at St Wendreda's, with their son John being born in 1956. She was employed by Cambridgeshire County Council, at County Hall, March, as Secretary to the County Surveyor, and later as Secretary to the Highways Training Scheme.

She joined Mothers' Union in June 1952, and went to her MU Branch at St Wendreda's Church where she worshipped regularly, but more recently had become a Diocesan Member. June adhered to the promises of the Mothers' Union, and her faith and values remained unshakeable and constant throughout her long life, with her support for the work of the MU and regular attendance at MU Meetings and Events, having been a witness to this.

SHEILA DUNN

Shingay Deanery Mothers' Union were saddened to learn of the sudden death just before Christmas of Mrs Sheila Dunn from Arrington, aged 91. Sheila had been an active and loyal member of Mothers' Union for 62 years and will be sorely missed.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Thank you for all the donations for Christmas. The Refuges and hostels were so pleased with your generosity and effort-

“We will never be able to thank you and members of the Mothers’ Union enough for your continued support for the women, especially in these difficult financial times.

It means so much to these families to have the opportunity to use the vouchers to choose the things that they like or need rather than being given a food parcel, which they are also grateful for but often say how lovely it is to actual have the freedom of choice. This can also be particularly useful if there are any specific dietary requirements that have to be adhered to or simply a child's favourite cereal that Mum is able to purchase.

Wishing you all the happiest and healthiest New Year”

This was from **Fenland Refuge**, who also received the sewing machine asked for in November-

“The sewing machine arrived today – we have a new resident that has taken it in and is using it straightaway. She was so thrilled”

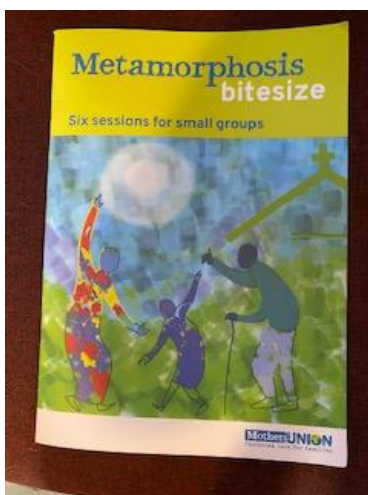
Cambridge Women’s Aid – We have new contact details. Please use before delivering and to ensure there is someone available to accept your donations. The delivery address will be changing in March.

Please contact Liz - housekeeper@cambridgewa.org.uk

Knitted Toys – some years back we supported “Teddies for Tragedies”, and many members were disappointed when we stopped. I am pleased to say that there has been an amendment agreed, and we are able to do so again, providing we use new yarn and safety stuffing. The teddies will need to have a label stating this (which I will organise). However, I am not aware of any current outlets for these teddies within Ely Diocese, so if you know of one local to you, please let me know.

Changing Market Towns Conference

The Changing Market Towns project is planning a day conference for Saturday 25 February, to be held at the Neale-Wade Academy in March. There will be a programme of seminars and speakers, and a marketplace including a bookstall. It is not yet known how many people will attend, but there were over 100 at a similar event in 2018. If you do attend please visit the Mothers’ Union stand and say hello.



All **Branch leaders** will shortly be receiving a copy of Metamorphosis bitesize. This is a recent production from the Mothers’ Union and has been developed over the last few years from the initial course run in Wisbech (but then called Stories on the Street). Trustees felt it was well worth buying a copy for each branch as it can be used in lots of different ways in branch meetings, sometimes using only part of a section if time is limited. If your branch is concerned about leading, I am sure a trustee would be willing to attend and help.

Ely Diocesan Mothers’ Union Charity no. 251394

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

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (17th January 2023)

Some of you may be aware that I was admitted to hospital just after Christmas, where I stayed for a few days into the new year. Fortunately, it turned out not to be appendicitis as initially diagnosed, but, after days of tests and scans, a serious infection of my kidneys. However, that is not the story! The story is what goes through your mind in situations like that; situations where you are suddenly reminded of your frailty as a human and the uncertainty of what tomorrow might bring. In fact, let us go not for “tomorrow”, but the next few minutes or seconds. And are we prepared for whatever this unknown future might be?

We are reminded in the Bible to be ready. Matthew had (as usual!) quite a lot to say about this in his Gospel. The one I expect everyone knows best is in 24:42-44 – “Be on your guard, then, because you do not know what day your Lord will come. If the owner of a house knew the time when a thief would come, you can be sure he would stay awake and not let the thief break into his house. So then, you also must always be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him.” Verses 45 to 51 following expand on the same theme, but I will leave you to look them up and not reproduce them here, as the point is already made – it is necessary to be prepared as we do not know what will happen next, but it just might be something as important as the Lord coming for us, and I cannot think of anything which would trump that!

So what does “being ready” mean in this context? I spent time in hospital dwelling on that question (especially before the doctors felt that they knew what the problem was and how to fix it!) so I can suggest to you what I think it means. I think it means feeling as confident as one can that you have lived in accordance with your understanding of God’s expectations of us. That you believe in God and His word as given to us through scripture That you love the Lord our God and our neighbours (who are all round the world) as we do ourselves. Quite an ask! I wonder whether any of us can really claim to feel comfortably “ready” against that measure? However, there is good news too. We believe in a merciful God, who, if we are truly sorry for what we have (or have not) done, will forgive us. So, as well as trying our best to be the paragons of virtue that Matthew sets out, we must also be always alert to our failings and asking God to forgive us. There is hope for us after all.

If you fetched your Bible to read the verses I mentioned above in Matthew 24, you could read the verses in 24 prior to those, 24:36-41 and also the section following, 25:1-13. In fact, why not just read Matthew, you will be well rewarded for the time it takes.



BETHELPURAM LEPROSY CENTRE IN VELLORE, INDIA

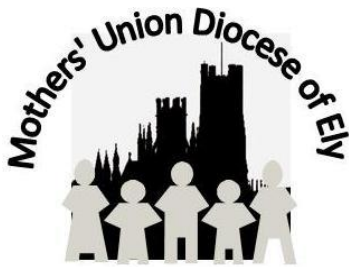
During the season of Christmas we extend our hands to people in need and offered them food, clothes (Sarees, Dhoties) bed sheets, essential toiletries (paste, brush, bathing Soap, Towel) etc.

11 inmates and 4 care takers are staying in the Bethelpuram leprosy centre – Keeraiathu village. The expenses of inmates is taken care of by CSI St. John’s Church, Diocese of Vellore. The members of the Women’s Board will visit the Leprosy Centre regularly to know the well being of the inmates.

Mrs. Malarkodi and Mrs. Sampathrani (Bible Women) will visit the Bethelpuram for prayer fellowship.

President of Women’s Board - Biscopina will hoist the Christmas flag every year in Bethelpuram Leprosy Centre.





Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

MARCH

NEWSLETTER 2023



EASTER CARDS ARE AVAILABLE NOW

Packs of five cost £3.50

Available from Mother's Union
shop online or branches get in
touch with Hazel Williams on

hwill66@icloud.com

01638 743897

QUIET DAY – Tuesday 28th March at St Peter's Church Yaxley. 10am - 2.30pm led by Revd. Paula Spalding, MU Diocesan Chaplin. The Theme is **Walking with God**. Those attending are invited to bring anything that will help them to spend time quietly - bible, journal, other reading material, drawing materials, craft activity, etc, for which they are able to bring all their own requirements.

SPRING DIOCESAN MEETING and AGM

Friday 21st April at St. Peter's Church Hall. March. 9.30am -2pm

9.30am Coffee for a 10am Start

A speaker from 'REFUGE' who support victims of Domestic Abuse

Displays, MU cards.

Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be supplied

LENT LUNCHESES, ELY CATHEDRAL.

MU Members will be helping with serving Lent Lunches in Ely Cathedral every Friday during Lent (starting on 24 February and ending on 31 March). Beginning in the Lady Chapel with a simple Eucharist and short reflection at 12.10pm, followed by Lunch at 12.45pm. All donations will go to AFIA ("Away From It All" Holidays).

Ely Cathedral Lunchtime Concert.

There will be a special Lunchtime Live Concert in Ely Cathedral on Thursday 16 March at 1.10pm being given by pupils from The King's School Ely.

If you are coming to Thursday Prayer or in Ely that day, why not pop along after lunch and hear the music students performing. Concerts usually last about 30-40 minutes.

<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/kings-ely-students>

Ely Deanery Lady Day Service is on Friday 24 March at 2.30pm, St Mary's Church Ely. Led by Revd Stephen Leek. Banners will be paraded. Refreshments served after the service. All welcome to attend.

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on
Zoom 10.30am**
March 16th Theme: Celebrating Mothers
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNwkpaeGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>
ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

**MU Diocesan Garden Party – 14th July 2-5pm in
Bishop Stephen's Garden, Ely.**

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union
Charity no. 251394
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897 hwil66@icloud.com

Cambridge Concert Orchestra
**Hear, There and Everywhere -
A World of Women Composers**
An orchestral concert
7pm Sunday 12 March 2023
West Road Concert Hall
11 West Road
Cambridge CB3 9DP
Tickets: adults £15, children FREE
Online box office: cco.org.uk
Postal tickets: +£2, ring 0333 666 3366
Remaining tickets will be available for sale at the door

In recognition of International Women's Day
To raise funds for Cambridge Women's Resources Centre



Conductor:
SUZANNE DEXTER-MILLS
cco.org.uk
[facebook.com/cambridgeconcertorchestra](https://www.facebook.com/cambridgeconcertorchestra)



Reg. charity 263524
Reg. charity 80280

Lent calendar. The season of Lent is upon us and Resources can be found on the MU Website here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/resources/general-faith-resources> It gives suggestions for special ways to mark every day through Lent in preparation for Easter. Please do share this with your churches and members

Brampton Branch News

Julie Barker

We had a fantastic start in January when we welcomed 11 new members. We were amazed by the overwhelming feeling of support. We also celebrated (at least) 100 years of our branch. We displayed all our records from the last 100 years including photos and notes of meetings.

Last year we were busy with a combination of afternoon and evening meetings. We invited friends from church and village to our meetings and everyone became involved in our activities. We attracted an extra 30 people who were happy to join in. We raised money for the the "Away from It All Holiday Scheme" with sales of jams, marmalades and cakes, we supported Huntingdon Women's Refuge by collecting toiletries to donate to the refuge as well as money to buy scented candles for the mothers and a selection of chocolates and sweets for the children for Mothers' Day, we donated items such as nappies and nighties to the Antenatal Ward of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital for expectant mums who arrive with nothing, we knitted lap blankets and twiddle muffs for the dementia wards of both Hinchingsbrooke and Peterborough Hospitals, we knitted hats for the Homeless in Wisbech and Peterborough and finally, we collected and donated more than 15 winter coats for the Ukrainian women who fled to this country last year because of the war in their country.

Let's hope we can continue with this level of activity in 2023.

mu@eastleightonstone.com



Annual Gathering, 22nd September 2023, York – all in ONE day!

Book now to avoid disappointment. **There will not be another Annual Gathering until 2026**, so make sure you come to this one! The theme is Transformation in Action, with a keynote address by Sheran Harper, our Worldwide President, prayer and reflections with Bishop Emma, our Central Chaplain and inspiring member stories from here and Overseas. Evensong follows at York Minster with the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell. **Please contact Ros if you would like tickets for the service or the Annual Gathering**

More information is on the website: www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023

It is with sadness we inform you of the death of Shelagh Connor on February 10th 2023. She was a member of the St. George's Church Littleport Branch and she held the Mothers' Union and its work close to her heart.

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (23rd February 2023)

About 40 years ago (in 1980 to be accurate), one of my favourite bands – Pink Floyd – wrote and recorded a song called “Comfortably Numb”. I wonder if that describes us today?

My reflection this month is going to require you to take a (mental) journey round the world and look at the way in which much of the world lives. On our journey (I am coming too, I hope you don't mind sharing) we will see many places where people are living in fear because of war or insurrection. It is one thing for the combatants in many of these places, but quite another for the civilians who just want to be allowed to scratch out a living. Think South Sudan, Ukraine. Then we come across places where there is drought or flood or extreme temperatures – places where even scratching out a living is a daily struggle against failure and death. Think Syria, Yemen. Seen enough yet? Shall we go on to places where there is totalitarian leadership, where there is no choice, even of thought. Think Afghanistan, Myanmar. It often happens that it is worse in these sorts of places if you happen to be a woman.

As we go on this journey, are you noticing how much of the world population falls into one of these, or similarly bad, circumstances? Think Russia, China. Have you seen how few places have people living freely and relatively comfortably, like us? Then go one step further and ask yourself why are we different?

I can answer that in one word – “chance”! “Luck” would work as an answer too. Through chance (or luck if you prefer) we do not generally exist day by day, depending on charity to survive. So what do we do, what do we feel about this privilege that we enjoy, purely by chance. We know that it is there, we cannot deny it, because we have just seen it all in our minds! If we have visited some of the holiday spots it is visible all around us. How can we possibly stay sane with the pressure of all this suffering of fellow human beings, when it could so easily have been us?

I can answer that too, but this time in the words of the song title, we have become “Comfortably Numb”! We have seen it on television and sometimes in the flesh, and we have normalised it so we can cope with the knowledge of it.

But the parable of the Good Samaritan applies to this situation just as much as it does to someone we might pass in the street. Just because this “neighbour” is on another continent does not mean we can allow ourselves to be numb to their plight. Remember what Matthew records as Jesus' reply (Matthew 22:34-40) “Love your neighbour as you love yourself” (*extract*). Jesus does not want us to be “comfortably numb”, He wants us to be very much active in helping these people. Remember also, there is a consequence if we fail to heed the plight of our fellows!

This is where the Mothers' Union front line is, this is why we need to show our support for our members in such places. This is where we really can make a difference to people's lives. Let us give thanks for Mary Sumner's vision in founding this wonderful organisation and make it the tool that God uses to help them.

Thy Kingdom Come 18th – 28th May 2023

This year, rather than producing an online service, we are encouraging members to hold events in their local areas and involve both their own church and other local churches.

The expanded remit of TKC this year to “*go the extra mile, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to love and serve those we are praying for or others who are in need*” fits particularly well with our vision and mission, and gives good opportunity to share this with others, who may be less aware of MU.

Resources and ideas are available now on the website : www.mothersunion.org/news/thy-kingdom-come-2023-0 Please signpost these to your members and encourage them to take part.

Susan Baker Memorial Fund

PURPOSE OF THE FUND

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

Ways in which we might support

Resources for groups i.e. Books, Audio Visuals, Art and craft materials

Christian themes – Advent calendars, Easter resources

Administration

Courses

Venue hire

APPLYING FOR A GRANT

For an application form apply to:

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union C/O Mrs Jean Webb, 35, Norfolk Road, Ely, CB6 3EJ or jmw35n@gmail.com

Faith in Action task group will make the decision and report to trustees of the amount granted. Maximum is £500.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

This year the theme for International Women's Day is #EmbraceEquity.

We will be taking part in this global campaign to highlight the difference between equality and equity and show how, as movement, we are embracing equity.

It is important to know the difference between equality and equity. Equality means that each individual is given the same resources and opportunities to help them succeed. Equity understands that each individual has different circumstances and life situations, which means resources need to be tailored to reach an equal outcome for everyone.

The International Women's Day 2023 campaign aims to highlight that equal opportunities are no longer enough and the world needs to start talking about, and embracing equity. Gender equality now needs to become gender equity for meaningful progress.

We would love to hear how your Mothers' Union branches are embracing equity to help transform lives in your communities.

Please do send examples of equity to Communications@mothersunion.org.

We really look forward to hearing from you.

You can find out more about the campaign here: <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>



Photographs of our MU stand at the Diocesan Market Towns Conference which took place at the end of February.



WORLDWIDE LINK NEWS

Irene Porter – Worldwide Officer

This has come from Revd. Claudine Mukawera

Dear Irene Porter, thank you so much for the news from Mother's union Ely Diocese. For us in Shyogwe diocese we are well. Some activities we are doing is to visit among us, the committee of diocesan level visiting parish in order to encourage them and help them for activities they have.

Here we take the leaders from archidiaconal then meet together then we go to visit the one parish we choose. and we help the children in Sunday school. attached is photo. God bless you. and greet all.

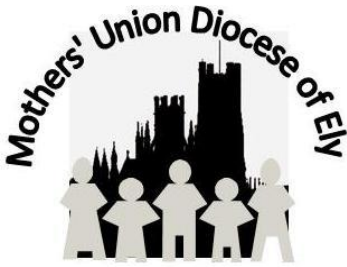


For us we continue the commitment of helping our children in Sunday School. This is the mums helping the children.

Mothers' Union leaders at Diocesan level who organise the visiting of MU in other parishes in order to help and encourage them in Mothers' Union work.

Visiting is very important among the leaders at Diocesan level and members of Kirombozi parish.





APRIL NEWSLETTER

2023

Ely Deanery Lady Day Service.

This year's Lady Day Service took place on 24 March at St Mary's Church, Ely.

It was led by Canon Stephen Leeke who preached on the theme "Transformation – Now!".

Banners were paraded from Ely St Mary's, Ely Cathedral, Littleport, Haddenham and Balsham.

During the service we considered the transformation God achieved in the life of Blessed Mary who was raised from humble peasant maiden to be the mother of our Lord, an example to us all and the most famous woman in history.

Stephen referred back to the seeds given out at last year's service in Haddenham. His seeds had resulted in 5 plants growing, with 3 producing flowers. He saved the seeds and reckoned he had ended up with over 4,000 seeds! That was quite a story, and reminds us how God can use even the small things in life, and how He can transform us and our lives, with abundant results.

It was lovely to gather together and celebrate the "Feast of the Annunciation". Fellowship continued after the service with enjoyable tea and cakes, served by Ely Mothers' Union.



For the faithfulness of your servant Mary, we give you thanks.

For saints of every age who, when called, have simply obeyed –

whether shepherd or scholar, faced by opposition or praise,

Asked to give from their riches or poverty – we give you thanks.

In your eyes all are blessed.

May we count ourselves among that number, willing to hear your call.

Our lives dedicated in service to our Saviour and King. Amen

© John Birch



Mary's Child

With Hazel, I was pleased to attend the Mary's Child Local Management Group meeting, where we met some of the volunteers who pack or deliver food parcels or assist in the community café; along with a local social worker, and local business people who offer their services or local knowledge. Mothers' Union has been offered a position on this group, and I look forward to learning more about the needs of the parishes of Farcet, Fletton and Stanground.



Trustees have received the first report from Esther, the Families Support Worker we are sponsoring, and learned about the ways she is supporting families, building their trust, and identifying needs.

I am very pleased that Trustees have agreed to continue funding Esther until the end of the year, as many families will need long-term support.

Esther

Afia

7 families are booked to spend May half term at Hunstanton. I am in need of boys wallets for the pocket money, so please keep a look out for me- I often find them, in pristine condition in charity shops, with football or Disney themes or similar.

Support for the Refuges

I am so pleased that representatives of REFUGE who run the Mid-Cambs and Fenland Womens' Refuges will be speaking at the Diocesan AGM on April 21st. We will be able to hear about how they support the women and children who need refuge. Come and find out how we can best support.

Donations of food (tins/packets) and cleaning items, particularly laundry, will be appreciated.

Maureen and I will be at the Diocesan Meeting to receive knitted items, postage stamps, postcards, etc. We hope to see you there.

SPRING DIOCESAN MEETING and AGM

Friday 21st April at St. Peter's Church Hall. March. 9.30am -2pm

9.30am Coffee for a 10am Start

A speaker from 'REFUGE' who support victims of Domestic Abuse

Donations of food (tins/packets) and cleaning items, particularly laundry, will be appreciated.

Displays, MU cards.

Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be supplied

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (24th March 2023)

As some of you may know, I am co-leading an Alpha Course at present and we have arrived at the question “Why did Jesus die?”, very appropriate at this time of the year. I was not surprised that “Forgiveness” was an important theme and we reasonably spent much time considering that. What did surprise me however was that it was the only theme prompted in the course book.

Now, as a Christian, I believe that Jesus’ death on the Cross was no ordinary death. It can be compared to a sacrifice – Jesus was punished for all the things that sinful humanity has done wrong, so we all can receive forgiveness from God. In this way Jesus died so that we may live – an amazing act.

But there is another part of this story which, for me, is just as amazing – Jesus died so He could rise again and by that show us in a very literal way that we die and are born again into the glorious Kingdom of God. He gave His life to help us understand our pathway to Heaven. That is pretty amazing too.

It is summed up in Romans 8:34 “Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is interceding for us.” And Romans 6:10-11 “The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus Christ.” Jesus overcame death itself!

There is a clear connection between the forgiveness of sin, of Jesus dying on the cross to atone for all our sins, and His rising from the dead as an example of the rebirth into God’s Kingdom, the everlasting life with God in Heaven. The connection is in the forgiveness and the assurance that all of us, if we are truly repentant, have the opportunity to have the slate wiped clean and be forgiven. This whole story is bursting with the love God has for us, for if it was not there why would He care? You only take such extreme action for someone you love very deeply.

We need to remember all that as we go about our lives, as every time we stray from the path it is hurtful to God and, as He loves us so very much, the hurt is all the deeper. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO.

Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **MARCH THURSDAY PRAYER**: “Celebrating Mothers”. Led by Jean Webb, Faith in Action Co-ordinator.

YouTube Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsJja_e193c

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on
Zoom 10.30am
April 20th**

Theme: Supporting each other in Faith

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

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

MU Diocesan Garden Party

14th July 3-5pm i

Bishop Stephen’s Garden, Ely.

Annual Gathering
22nd September 2023, York

More information is on the website:
www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023

Prison News



After the success of the knitted Christmas stockings filled with sweets, that were given to the children in the visitor's centre at **Whitemoor Prison**, more gifts have been donated for Easter. Burwell Branch and church members knitted a wide variety of egg covers and sent 134 knitted items plus 20 extra eggs to the centre.

Revd Paula Spalding

I met with the new chaplain at **Littlehey** to discuss what MU can do to support the prison, mainly the Relationships Course and possibly Sunday services. Today I received a request from Gemma of Invisible Walls to see if there is anyone who would be interested in helping in the Visits Hall or with prisoners without visitors. We used to run a monthly coffee morning for the latter but having an activity seems a good idea if they are going to organise it.

It has taken a while for security clearance to come through for our own volunteers but we are getting there.

Catherina Griffiths

From Gemma the manager of the Visits hall.

We would mostly only need volunteers on Saturdays and Sundays as we have more children visiting at weekends. We have two visit sessions each day and it would be great to have volunteers who could work in the play area within the visits hall. The morning visit is from 9am to 11am and the afternoon visit is from 2-4pm. We also run 'Family Days' once a month on a Wednesday. This is an all day visit for children and families where we provide lots of additional activities for children. It would be great to have some volunteers to support children on these days too.

Finally, we are hoping to start a new weekly group (probably on a Tuesday morning) for prisoners who do not receive any visitors and who do not have any family contact. We don't know exactly what this group will look like yet, as we need to consult prisoners about what they want, but it will probably involve doing craft activities and playing games.

We do ask that volunteers can commit to working with us for a year if possible. This is because it can take some time to get security checks and clearance done on volunteers and we like to invest time in training and inducting new volunteers and staff. If anyone would be interested in being involved in any of these activities that would be great and the frequency that people volunteer can be negotiated.

Annual Review

In the same mailing as this newsletter you will receive a copy of our 2022 Annual Review. This gives comprehensive details of the MU Diocesan Trustees board as well as all the activities that have taken place throughout the year. Please circulate as widely as possible.

The finance report will be available, after audit, for the Diocesan meeting and on-line, upon request, to anyone who is not able to be there.

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union

Charity no. 251394

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

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com



On Saturday March 25th, members of the Diocese of Lusaka Mothers' Union celebrated LADY DAY with a procession through the streets, which included a marching band with drums and brass instruments. The excited ladies looked very smart in their Mothers' Union uniforms. They gathered in a church in Mandevu parish in Lusaka, with singing and renewal of vows. The parade and service can be watched on the Diocese of Lusaka Mothers' Union facebook page, enjoy if you can.

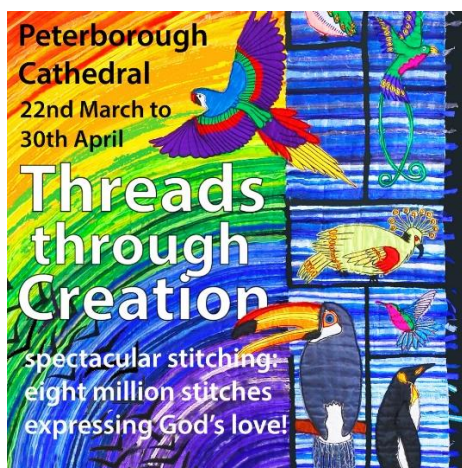
“Threads Through Creation” Exhibition:

An uplifting textile art exhibition with 8 million stitches expressing God’s love, through 12 huge embroidered silk panels (2.7m high, up to nearly 4m wide).

It’s an exuberant retelling of the creation story in the book of Genesis, a retelling which many visitors will find both moving and breath-taking. Viewers are treated to a wonderful variety of colours, shapes, patterns – and of course lots of creatures! You’ll find the extraordinary scale, vibrant colours, complex designs and spectacular stitching truly amazing. The exhibition is one of the largest textile projects by a single artist, ever. It has taken Jacqui Parkinson nearly three years. She says: “My Christian faith is the creative trigger in most of my work. I aim to create beautiful panels for everyone’s enjoyment. My work is designed to catch the eye and set you thinking.”

Showing in Peterborough Cathedral from 22 March – 22 April, then coming to Ely Cathedral from 14 June to 23 July.

More info here: www.creation-threads.co.uk and www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk and www.elycathedral.org/events/threads-through-creation-exhibition



Members of Burwell Branch enjoying waffles with a variety of toppings. Fruit, cream, jam, maple syrup or honey to choose from.

Wonderful surprise to welcome Lucie, a former member, to the meeting - who now lives in Yorkshire.



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Newsletter May 2023



Some wonderful knitting to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III seen on a post box in Darlington.

AFRICAN VISIT

Sheran and Bev are visiting Africa for three weeks to meet Zonal Presidents as well as Diocesan leaders and members. They are in Uganda for a week and then Kenya where representatives from Rwanda and Tanzania will also join them. Their first event was a Worldwide Council Global Gathering (using Zoom) where sharing and learning took place at international level.

The visits will focus on strengthening relationships and inspiring and encouraging the membership.



It was good to be at the Diocesan Spring Meeting at March, to receive wonderful knitted items, postcards, stamps – and so many items for the refuges. Jocelyn and Angela, our speakers were overwhelmed with your generosity. Thank you all.

The postage stamps are being passed on to our contacts for the 3 charities. May I please ask that care is taken over removing the stamps from the envelopes. Please leave a good margin of paper around each stamp, as damaged perforations make the stamps worthless. Please do not steam stamps off envelopes.

At the meeting we heard that there are 2 young expectant Mums in Whitworth House, so if you know of baby equipment, please get in touch so that they can be supported.

When I got home I had a message to say that 1 young man was moving into his own accommodation form Wheatsheaf Close, and 3 young people were expected in; so more items being requested. Fortunately, Maureen has some in stock in her o-so-useful garage.

The demand for our support goes on!

I displayed knitting patterns, especially for our newer items - Levi Lovey comforter square (pictured), a knitted teddy, and a cannula sleeve for dementia patients (pictured). If anyone would like these, or patterns for baby hats and blanket, adult hat and twiddle muffs, I will be happy to email them to you (or someone in your branch).



MU Diocesan Garden Party

14th July 3-5pm i

Bishop Stephen's Garden, Ely.

Annual Gathering

22nd September 2023, York

More information is on the website:

www.mothersunion.org/annual-gathering-2023

Ros has one ticket available for the gathering



Gifts for Easter

Anne Hassell and the residents of Steeple Morden have collected 50 Easter eggs. Reverend Carol at Farcet and Mary's Child were delighted to receive them



TRIP OUT

Members of Burwell MU enjoying tea, scones and chat at the Twenty Pence Garden Centre.

Paula, our MU chaplain was with us too but took the photo!

WORLDWIDE NEWS

IRENE PORTER - WORLDWIDE LINK

Some lovely pictures for you from Claudine in our link diocese of Shyogwe in Rwanda. Mothers' Union members helping one another with gifts of cows, pigs and goats. At our Thursday prayers in April we were joined, via Zoom, by two members from Kigali, Rwanda. They told us how Mothers' Union is involved in Parish visits, Healing prayer, Bible study and that several new members have joined Mothers' Union recently.



From Sue Claydon

Having some great experiences. This is Lyn's first time in Lesotho. When we got here on Thursday she was putting something in the bin when she saw a scorpion on the curtain, really knew she was in Africa then.

We are staying at the Durham Link Centre, boy what a set up. We are in the guest rondavel which could be a holiday let.



A REFLECTION

Philip Baker

At nearly every church service we talk of “Peace” – perhaps most memorable is the phrase from Philippians 4:7 “And the Peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”. But what do we mean when we say it? In fact, what does “peace” involve, what are we wishing on ourselves and our neighbours when we say it?

This is another of those words, phrases or complete prayers that we know by heart and say largely without considering. When we pray for world peace it is fairly obvious what we are thinking of – we hope for the absence of war and aggression so that the inhabitants of the named places can enjoy a quiet tranquillity. This is the same kind peace we refer to when we go for a country walk to get away from the noise and bustle and to find a little peace and quiet (except rather significantly more so!). But the Peace of God – what is that?

Most of us probably consider “peace” to be an intensely personal experience, how can this possibly be shared? But I suggest that God’s “Peace” is something different, something not just shared but requiring us all to contribute to in order for it to exist. Consider for a moment the condition of an individual in a traumatic state, possibly someone in Sudan or any other area of great turmoil and unrest. That person can achieve a state of peace only fleetingly, however hard they may pray for it. So where do we come in?

Our Christian role surely is to stand with that person, to know they exist and work for an easing of the dire conditions in which they exist. If we know that people exist in such appalling conditions, how can it be possible for us to achieve our own state of peace unless we know we have tried to help? Consider the Good Samaritan parable; certainly, the robbed individual was greatly helped, but by the same actions the Samaritan also gained. He was in the knowledge that he had done the right thing and through that could be at peace with himself. Had he walked on by (as others did) his conscience would have carried the load of knowing he had not done as he should, as those who walked on by probably discovered for themselves.

What does the Bible say about this? One definition it provides is “the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit that supersedes earthly circumstances”. Paul starts most of his Letters with the phrase “Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”. Peace is a blessing from God and requires a mixture of humility and courage to experience. Proverbs 3:5 says “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”. So, even though the Peace of God is beyond our understanding, if we have Faith we can still receive it as long as we have the courage to make our own contribution.

The consequence of this might therefore be summarised that, in addition to praying in Faith for our own “Peace of the Lord”, we must pray and take positive steps to support others to have such Peace, or we may be disappointed!

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

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **APRIL THURSDAY PRAYER**: “Supporting each other in Faith”. Led by Maureen Haigh, Huntingdon & Wisbech Archdeaconry Vice-President.

YouTube Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Evj5VuC7_nw

Diocesan Members’ Lunch.

We are delighted to be able to organise this annual event again, which this year will take place on Tuesday 7 November, 12.30pm, at Ely City Golf Club. Full details and further info will be circulated in the Autumn, but please put this date in your diaries.

Thy Kingdom Come 18th – 28th May 2023

This year, rather than producing an online service, we are encouraging members to hold events in their local areas and involve both their own church and other local churches.

The expanded remit of TKC this year to “*go the extra mile, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to love and serve those we are praying for or others who are in need*” fits particularly well with our vision and mission, and gives good opportunity to share this with others, who may be less aware of MU.

Resources and ideas are available now on the website: www.mothersunion.org/news/thy-kingdom-come-2023-0 Please signpost these to your members and encourage them to take part.

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

Theme: Following in Christ's Footsteps

There will be a different ID to connect to the cathedral Zoom in May, which will be sent out later this month. Please look out for it.

**Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union
Charity no. 251394**

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

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

**The Autumn Diocesan meeting will be at
Waterbeach Church on 14th October 2023.**

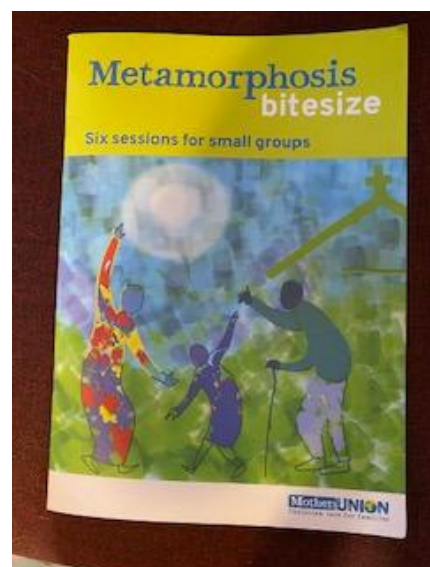
**More details later but please put the
date in your diary.**

If you are a Branch leader and have not yet received a copy of the book Metamorphosis, from Hazel, please get in touch and let her know.

Contact details above.



Beautiful Easter Lilies paid for by donations in,
memory of loved ones.





June Newsletter 2023

Bishop Stephen

Sad to be saying goodbye to Bishop Stephen as he prepares to leave Ely and become the next Bishop of Lincoln. Bishop Stephen is a Diocesan Member of MU and is a faithful supporter of our organisation. It is great that we will be able to enjoy our Diocesan Garden Party on 14th July in his lovely garden before he leaves. Wishing him God's blessings for his future ministry and thanking him for all he has done in the Diocese of Ely.

MU Diocesan Garden Party
14th July 3-5pm in
Bishop Stephen's Garden, Ely.

Bring your own packed tea.

Fizz and soft drinks provided.

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



Revd. Paula Spalding led the Burwell group in making 'May Baskets' from paper and hearing about the many traditions that are linked to May. The traditional maypole dancing and flower crowns to celebrate Spring are common in this country but flying kites, eating flavoured porridge or May Day cake and making bonfires are also common across the world. Barwick in Yorkshire has the distinction of the largest Maypole in England, standing 86 feet in height.

If your branch has had an interesting and enjoyable session do send me something for this newsletter. We would love to hear from you, with or without a photograph.

Following our Diocesan Day ay March I received this from our speakers, Angela and Jocelyn , from Mid Cambs and Fenland Refuges respectively –

“We just want to say a HUGE thank you for allowing us time at your AGM to talk to you.

We were over-awed by the generosity that everyone showed us. We know domestic abuse is a difficult subject for many to discuss due to their own traumas and experiences, so we were delighted that so many wanted to ask questions.

There was a query around funding that your treasurer (I think) asked, and I (Angela) would like to respond. Our manager Carolyn confirmed that we are funded by Cambs. County Council and that helps us run the refuge. However, all other fundraising for the Cambridgeshire refuges has to be done by us. Funds that are raised through national donations are put into a big 'pot' and eventually divided up between refuges that need extra items or funding

Joc wants to point out that 78% of children from abusive households are aware of the abuse –not 78% of all children as may have inadvertently been said.

I have attached some posters that we promised to send over to you, we would be grateful if you could distribute these to your groups so they can print off and put them in appropriate places in your meeting areas. Refuge NDAH is A3 and Warning signs I believe is A4 size.

Once again, we send a huge thank you to you all.”

I am sure all who heard them speak will feel that hearing about the work of Refuge affirms our commitment to continue to do so. The posters mentioned will be sent as attachments in a separate mailing. Please use them if you can, and especially during the 16 Days Of Activism Against Gender Abuse which begins on November 25th.

With the 16 Days in mind, may I commend to all who enjoy the Inspector Lynley novels by Elizabeth George (and others!) to read “Something to Hide” out in paperback this year. Set in London, it is not easy bedtime reading as its about FGM, but thought provoking and enlightening.

My thanks as ever, for recent donations of domestic items, which have gone to the young people’s hostel in Ely, and to Whitworth House in Cambridge.

Domestic Abuse Survey (to share with members)

Mothers’ Union are working with the Church of England to ensure we are all equipped to recognise and respond to domestic abuse. In partnership with colleagues that have been involved with Diocese of Melbourne and the Cumbria research project, we have developed a baseline survey which will allow us to further understand our current culture, behaviour, skills, and knowledge in terms of recognising and responding to domestic abuse.

The link below will provide you access to the survey, which is open to all to complete and completely voluntary. The survey is constructed around 15 multiple choices questions and takes 10-15 minutes to complete, with no personal identifying information required. You are able to specify if you are a Mothers’ Union member in the survey and there are helpline numbers at the beginning and end. Link to the survey: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/15YH0B/>

Astonishing textile art at the Cathedral: eight million stitches



'Threads through Creation' is an astonishing, uplifting textile art exhibition showing at Ely Cathedral from 14th June to 26th July.

The show consists of twelve HUGE silk panels (2.7m high, up to nearly 4m wide) re-imagining the creation story from the bible. You'll find the extraordinary scale, vibrant colours, complex designs and spectacular stitching truly breath-taking.

It's one of the largest textile art projects by a single artist, ever. Jacqui Parkinson has a national reputation for large scale work – this is touring twenty cathedrals. She spent three years on the panels, using miles of thread - and eight million stitches!



It's beautiful, highly enjoyable, a lovely thing to take friends to - and great fun for children too.

See more at www.creation-threads.co.uk and www.elycathedral.org. (Admission charges apply – see the cathedral website.)

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

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **MAY THURSDAY PRAYER: "Being a Disciple"**. Led by Ros Wright, Ely Diocesan MU Secretary.

YouTube Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvp8YPDFfXo>

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union
Charity no. 251394

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

/

Ros 01223 861846

roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897

hwill66@icloud.com

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

Theme: Mothers' Union – Supporting God in Prayer and Humility

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGINWkpaeGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

I am often able to bring you news and pictures from Rwanda, Zambia and India, but Nigeria is still proving to be difficult. After searching through various Facebook and website pages I have come across a news item from last year, relevant to voting and elections to be held this year.

The Anglican Mothers' Union Executive released a communique, signed by the Mothers' Union President, Mrs Angela Eberechukwu Ndukuba, wife of the Primate, Church of Nigeria. Mothers' Union were concerned about voter's apathy, none collection of voting cards, voter's education and other points that could lead to non-credible and fair elections. There was also mention of the inflation rate, which in August 2022 had increased to 20.52%. Mothers' Union also noted that this was causing untold hardship in the country. They called on the government to promote the creativity industry, agriculture and technology to create employment, especially for the youth. They also called for action against the wanton killings in the country, abduction, insurgency and terrorism.

Strong words from Mothers' Union, Nigeria!

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (24th May 2023)

A week or so ago as I write this piece it was Christian Aid week and we were being reminded of our obligations to help our brothers and sisters who are, through no fault of their own, in places where they are in danger and in need. As if to ensure that I did not miss the point, I then attended an excellent presentation by our own Sue Claydon to the Anglesey Branch, which is one of my neighbours, on the plight of women in Africa. I feel sure I was being prompted to write this month about the challenges facing our fellow humans, many of whom are also Christians (not that it matters), in places far from our relatively safe and prosperous homes.

Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, 12:12-17, "Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. In the same way, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptised into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink. For the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," that would not keep it from being a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, "because I am not an eye, I don't belong to the body," that would not keep it from being a part of the body. If the whole body were just an eye, how would it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell? "

All this means to me that all people on earth are part of a whole. Every person contributes something to the existence of the whole. And the whole would not be complete without every single person on the planet. We are all interdependent and all are equally important to our Lord God. Extending Pauls analogy, should a part of our body, our throat for example, develop a problem, become sore perhaps in our example of a throat, then the rest of our body attempts to do something about it to make it better – take a calming medicine possibly . In the same way I suggest we are called on to help those people, those remote parts of our body, who are in some kind of need. We are not expected to stand by and think that it is someone else's problem, it is not, it is ours! Think of how amazing it would be if everyone acted in accordance to that principle – there would be no refugee crisis as there would be no war, no starvation as all the food would be shared, no poverty as everyone's contribution would be rewarded properly and no-one would be either super-wealthy or destitute. We can but dream.

An awareness of the issue and a willingness to take action is needed and that is what the Mothers' Union does – promote awareness and do something about it. However, we must not be complacent, there is more to be done and more that we could do, even with the limited resources available. One thing we can all help with is sharing the dream by talking about it to others (possibly over tea and cake?)



Balsham Branch news

Two rugs were made in red, white and blue to commemorate the Coronation of Charles 111. The first photo is a rug/blanket knitted by our Balsham Branch's Treasurer Janet Andrews and the second photo is knitted by Janet's sister-in-law Celia- not a MU member- but a very good knitter.

The wool was supplied via a MU member from Linton whose daughter is a wool sales person and provides all our wool. She delivered the red, white and blue wool to her mother for us to make relevant garments commemorating the Coronation.

We have just had our May meeting - not many of us but a good meeting on the history of Balsham.

Best
Joanna



Two Bags of lovely baby and toddler knitting from members of the **Three Rivers Branch**. Thank you they will be much appreciated.

Below are pictures about Barwick Maypole Festival (see front page).

In 1972 ladders and ropes helped raise the 86 feet high maypole although now they use a crane and ropes. They still have to paint it each time and carry it into the village.





July-August Newsletter 2023



£500 for AFIA raised at the Strawberry Tea held in the garden of Veronica Woodcock-Ellard



at Farcet in June. These funds will help send more families in need away on holiday.



WORLDWIDE

Irene Porter - Worldwide Link

On Sunday 25th June, 14 people from my own church, St Peter's Yaxley, flew to Rwanda. Three are Mothers' Union members, Angela Hilliard, Marilyn Debbage and Pauline Wallace. During a short time in Kigali, they will be meeting Bishop Nathan, some of you may have met him as he has visited Ely Diocese several times, and his wife Esther. Esther has joined us at Thursday Prayers, via zoom, from the Mothers' Union office in Kigali.

The group will leave Kigali and travel, 7 hours by coach, across Rwanda to Kamembe in Cyangugu Diocese. Their journey will take them through our link Diocese of Shyogwe. Rev Claudine and the Mothers' Union members there know they will be passing through and will be praying for their safe journey.



During their time around Kamembe, some of the group will be fitting Solar panels, teaching in a school and training local Pastors to run Christian Marriage courses. Angela, Marilyn and Pauline will be doing craft activities in nursery schools. Angela, Marilyn and Pauline plan to wear their Mothers' Union badges and are hoping to meet other Mothers' Union members during their time in Rwanda.

Before returning to Kigali, the group will take another long coach journey to visit "Imbabazi, A Centre for Hope" which was established after the 1994 Genocide as an orphanage for Children who had lost parents through the Genocide. It continues today to nurture and empower Rwanda's children and the local communities.

The group return home on July 7th, blessed and strengthened in faith by their experiences in Rwanda.

MU Diocesan Garden Party
14th July 3-5pm in
Bishop Stephen's Garden, Ely.

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

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

THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral
and on Zoom 10.30am
July 20th and August 17th

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaeGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

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

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

“Serving God in Prayer and Humility”. Led by Gail Swanson, Ely Cathedral MU Branch Leader.

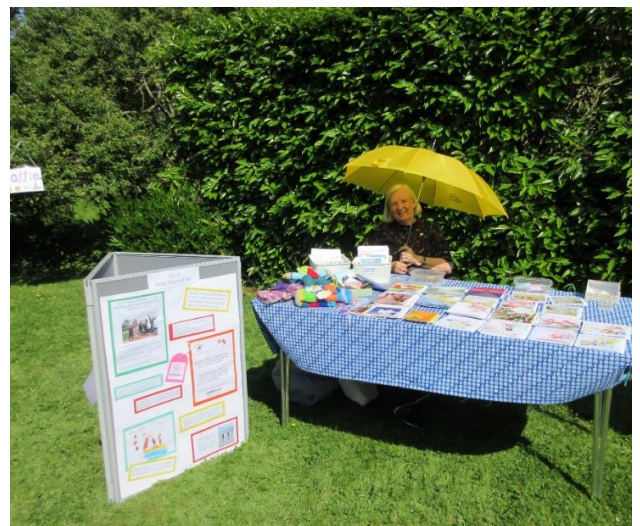
YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRQOVqHfoaU>

We are sorry about the poor sound quality during the hymn. Here is a recording of the hymn to enjoy from Chet Valley Churches, Norfolk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytBTMr0K_I

Ely Cathedral MU Garden Party.



Ely Cathedral MU held an enjoyable Summer Garden Party on a wonderful sunny afternoon on 7th June. As well as delicious cream teas, there was a variety of stalls, selling cakes, plants, bric-a-brac and books. The fantastic amount of over £670 was raised in funds, which will be divided between the “Summer of Hope” appeal and AFIA.



RIP - Canon Peter Hill

We are sorry to hear of the death on Friday 19 May 2023 of Canon Peter Hill who in retirement held PtO in this diocese until 2019. Peter was a Diocesan member in Ely Diocese. Our thoughts are with his family. May Peter rest in peace and rise in glory.

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (26th June 2023)

As I write this piece, I have just returned from the funeral of a friend I had known for many years. Another funeral is due in a few weeks. The friend with whom I stayed in Devon last week was, on the day after I returned home, diagnosed with cancer, but we pray he will come through. However, it all serves to remind me how fragile life is. God has given us the most amazing gift of life and He can take it away at any time. We only have one chance at getting this right and so we need to be ready, to be prepared for that time, whenever it may come.

Matthew 24:42-44 is an example of how we might approach this: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into." The remainder of Matthew 24 continues in this vein, exhorting us to be prepared at all times. But how are we to be prepared?

At the appropriate time we know we will be judged by God. So, we can test ourselves by asking ourselves questions such as "are there things we regret (doing or not doing) for which we have not repented or corrected by our actions"? Can we honestly say that we have done our best to follow Jesus? For Jesus said, as reported in John 14:6 "I am the truth, the way and the life; no-one comes to the Father but through Me". Through these or other means, in our own hearts we can know if we are ready to meet our Maker; if we are prepared for that visit by the "thief in the night".

You will probably not be surprised to read that one of my own measures is provided by the Mothers' Union. Mary Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union, wrote a prayer which always brings a tear to my eye, I have them now just thinking about quoting it:

"All this day O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee: and every life I touch, do thou by the Spirit quicken, whether through the words I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen".

In this context the meaning of "quicken" is to revive or make alive, restore to a flourishing condition, to awaken. I am not the person who can say how successful I have been. I leave that, as instructed, to God. But I have truly tried to live to that prayer and the principles it espouses. If we all did that, how much better the world would be!

A couple of days ago it was 2 years and 9 months from Susan's passing. She showed me that way and I pray I have done my part in continuing with it. God Bless her, me and you all.



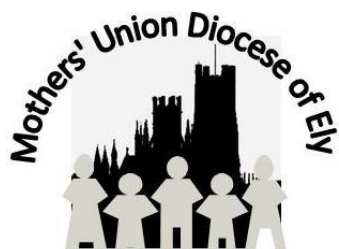
Burwell Branch MU have donated a Large Print Bible to Whitemoor Prison for use in The Chapel or to borrow if needed.

Della Fletcher, who many of you know as a past President of Ely Diocese celebrates, this month, being a member for 50 years. Our congratulations go to her and all others who have given so much to the Mothers' Union.

Wisbech and North Nene Mothers' Union after their June meeting enjoyed some light entertainment by playing some games, some old and some not so old! Unfortunately, I could not open the pictures they sent. Be assured they will appear in our next newsletter.

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union

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



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

September Newsletter 2023



Summer Garden Party

50 members were joined by the Bishop of Huntingdon, fortunately in a marquee in the Bishop of Ely's Garden, as it was an afternoon of torrential rain. It was still a great opportunity to get together and £186 was raised for MU charities.

Della Fletcher, a past president, was presented with her certificate by the Bishop, marking 50 years of membership.

MU Diocesan Autumn Meeting on Saturday October 14th

Waterbeach Church Hall 9.30am for 10am start

Speaker: Revd. Matthew Bradbury on Modern Slavery

Reports from Task Group Leaders/Bring packed lunch/ Parking next to hall



Brampton Branch has raised £781 for Away from It All Holiday Scheme so far this year.

We have a sales table at our normal meetings where members donate and sell marmalade, jams or any homemade goodies. We held our Garden Party in June and asked for donations and finally we were at the Brampton Village Fete in July (on a wet day) selling cakes, jams, marmalades, cookies and flapjacks. The photo shows the table at the Village Fete with the table loaded with wrapped and labelled goodies. It was a slow afternoon but we sold out in 4 hours.

This is hopefully not the end of the fundraising in 2023 as we will continue to sell things at meetings in the autumn and we are planning to hold our famous pudding evening in October (7.30 pm 10th October in Brampton Church Hall). At the pudding evening we offer a range of homemade puddings with cream, ice cream or custard. People from the local area all come enjoy a pudding and make a donation to Away from it all Holiday Scheme. Please come along and join us.

Julie Barker

Branch Leader

mu@eastleightonstone.co.



Just one last picture of the
THREADS THROUGH CREATION
Exhibition which has now
moved on to its next Cathedral.
Such wonderful panels of textile
art.

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral
and on Zoom 10.30am
September 21st**

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89729198133
?pwd=K1V0Vy83NmoxT2JLRDZPNdDTHp
HZz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89729198133?pwd=K1V0Vy83NmoxT2JLRDZPNdDTHpHZz09)

Meeting ID: 897 2919 8133

Passcode: 771395

St Neots Branch News

Liz Elson



Members of St Neots branch celebrated Mary Sumner Day with a morning Eucharist followed by coffee and cake served in church.

We have had a lovely summer attending garden parties, including our own on 6th July at which we raised over £340, most of which was for AFIA, with a donation also to the Overseas Fund. Guests joined us from Brampton branch and from the Gransdens. Small groups of us also attended the tea parties

held by Brampton branch and Shingay deanery branch, where we were made most welcome. The sun shone on all three occasions and it was a real blessing to be able to meet together, each time in beautiful gardens.

Two members of our branch also celebrated significant birthdays recently. Rosemary Darrington celebrated her 80th birthday on 14th June and Jill Henthorne celebrated her 90th on 20th August.

Haddenham Branch News Audrey Kirk



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

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

“Following in Christ’s Footsteps”. Led by Revd Stuart Mitchell.

YouTube

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=py7yi_u0HZn0

Ely Diocesan Mothers’ Union
Charity no. 251394

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

**Mothers’ Union afternoon tea to
celebrate Mary Sumner Day**

A REFLECTION – Mothers’ Union – September

Philip Baker (22nd August 2023)

This month I am departing from my usual formula in favour of a different subject entirely – the Mothers’ Union itself!

I started writing these pieces as a continuation of Susan’s contributions. Her passing is nearly three years ago and, as with other anniversaries, it is cause for a review on what has happened and the changes which have taken place. Susan was a great supporter, even passionate, about the Mothers’ Union and, as her successor as Branch Leader I have experienced life on the inside. And it is not all rosy (in my opinion).

The Mothers’ union was founded by Mary Sumner in 1876 in Hampshire, England, and is now a worldwide movement with millions of members spread through 84 countries. It does incredible work and is practically saving lives and improving the conditions for families wherever it exists. Put MU into your on-line search engine and you find Manchester United, Musicians Union and all manner of organisations abbreviated to MU, but not Mothers’ Union until you go down quite some way! Now in part that might be because MU is a common abbreviation, but it does not explain why we are so far down the list, even below Musicians Union. Put in “who supports families” and the list of groups is endless, but does not include the Mothers’ Union at all!

My Branch is growing older. This is a common issue in the UK, there is a shortage of younger people willing to join the work of a traditional organisation and we all suffer from it. But we work with and on behalf of younger women and families: supporting refuges, family holidays via AFIA and all manner of things involving younger people, so why are we so low profile? Is it really just us not making a fuss about what we do? I am having some success recruiting members, both men and women, to our movement, but, although they are generally younger than me, they do not qualify to be described as “youngsters”! (with apologies to my members – I say to them “you are as young as you feel and that is all that matters”). So, although the organisation is storming away in some countries, indeed many countries, in the country where it started we are struggling.

So what can we do? There are ways to “trick” internet search engines into moving you up the list, but that is not the solution. That will be found at Branch level, by and among us as members. We need to talk more openly about our work, be enthusiastic about our growth overseas, encourage our vicars to (a) join and (b) involve us in their services and parish work (and not just to make the tea, although that would be a start in some parts of the diocese). We can offer to lead services at appropriate times, such as Mothering Sunday and any other opportunities offering enlightenment of the plight of families around the world and in the UK. One such might be to talk about our 16 days of activism highlighting our response to domestic abuse. Uncomfortable, but very important to those who benefit.

Beating our drum is not a natural behaviour for us, but we need to learn to do it a little as otherwise fewer and fewer people will know about us and our work, which would be a shame.



St Mary’s Ely Branch Afternoon Tea Party.

St Mary’s Ely Branch held a very enjoyable Afternoon Tea Party in July which raised £300: £200 for the Summer of Hope Appeal, and £100 for AFIA (“Away From It All” Holidays).

We were pleased to welcome members and guests from other branches in the Deanery and surrounding villages. Many thanks to all those came along and supported the event, and to St Mary’s MU members for providing refreshments.

KIGALI VISIT

Three Mothers' Union members visited Rwanda recently. I am sure you will enjoy reading about their experiences.

MY RWANDA REFLECTIONS - MARILYN DEBBAGE

I went to Rwanda with the team from St Peter's church Yaxley, it was my first visit to Africa. I found Rwanda to be a stunningly beautiful country that certainly lives up to its name as the Land of a Thousand Hills. I had been forewarned by fellow MU members who had been on previous visits that the terrain would be a challenge and it certainly was just that, even walking around the ups and downs of the guest house grounds made me breathless!! On our journey from Kigali to our base at the Peace Guest House in Kamembe we stopped at a cafe to meet up with Bishop Frank and his wife Eva. Eva is the MU president for Cyangugu diocese, and when we introduced ourselves to her as MU members there was an immediate bond of warmth and friendship which I really appreciated having so recently arrived in the country.



On Sunday we went to St Peter's church in Kabahire. We were welcomed by people singing and dancing as they came down the track to meet us, two women were carrying a large blue and white Mothers' Union banner, it was so joyful and uplifting. At the church we exchanged hugs and smiles and took photos of us all together around the banner. One of my standout moments was our day on Ishwa Island. We took craft activities for the children in the nursery school. There were a large number of children on the island, many of whom were poorly dressed and looked extremely frail and vulnerable. During and after our first craft session in the school I felt quite hopeless about what we could do for these children to make a real lasting difference to their lives. However later in the morning two bins of porridge were brought into the classroom and our interpreter Maurice handed me a jug and said 'you can feed them'. The children all came up with their mugs and I was able to fill each one up to the brim, each child drank their porridge and then wiped the mug clean with their fingers - nothing was wasted. I was told that this highly nutritious porridge may well have been the only meal the children got each day and that in the years since this feeding programme had been introduced by Mission Possible UK the incidence of malnutrition and vitamin deficiency has greatly decreased. As a supporter of the Champion a Child scheme which funds this programme and various other projects on the island I was encouraged to see that there is hope for improved living conditions for these children and families. Pastor Bertha came with us to Ishwa, I was so impressed by her faith, energy, compassion

and empathy. She linked arms with me as we walked down the steep hill from the village to the lake. She told me about the project the MU is working on with unmarried mothers. She explained that these girls and women are usually rejected by their families and made to feel worthless. The project provides them with training in sewing and tailoring skills, this empowers them to grow in self respect and confidence and also enables them to earn an income. Later in the week we saw this in action when we visited another church, a group of unmarried mothers were sewing outdoors using Singer treadle sewing machines. I talked to some of the ladies about their work and one of them proudly showed me a child's skirt that she had made. One of our team leaders was asked to pray over the group and bless them and we all joined in with her prayer. It was a joy to be able to pray for these beautiful women.



I feel so privileged to have been able to meet up with Mothers' Union members in Cyangugu diocese and to see and hear about the various projects and community work the Mothers' Union supports. I thank God for the faith and love of the amazing women I met and am so inspired by their desire to bless and pray for us.

RWANDA 2023: ANGELA HILLIARD

This would be my first trip to Rwanda, for some coming with us it would be their third trip. I wanted to have first-hand experience of all I had heard from friends about Rwanda: see and be part of their daily life, hospitality, friendship, joyful singing & dancing and general happiness even owning so little.

I help with the 'Sparks' toddlers pre-school groups at St. Peters Church therefore my experience was going to be used as part of a small team teaching and delivering activities over five days in Nursery schools with a slightly larger age range than in the UK.

Prior to the trip three of us spent eight weeks of selecting and preparing craft materials and tools for our chosen Bible stories and songs we would share with the children. We spent many hours cutting out sheep masks, fish shaped finger puppets and crowns. The number we would see in each school seemed to just keep increasing which made me apprehensive about the class sizes, 50-75 we were now being told.

So after months of excitement and planning the 25th June arrived and our journey to Rwanda began; I felt our craft team was ready, and as prepared as we could be, to serve the Nursery children of Rwanda. After a wonderful journey from the capital Kigali, which took us through a rain forest and close to wildlife, we reached Kamembe and the Cyangugu Diocese area the schools were in.

We had over two suitcases full of materials with us! Was this going to be enough? How would the chosen crafts work for these children. After introductory songs and Bible stories it was time for the crafts. Very soon it became very clear what we have come to accept as basic materials and items had not been seen either by the children and in some cases by the teachers e.g. glue sticks, sellotape or colour pencils. Once demonstrated though in a short while we had lovely smiling faces holding up their masterpieces; fishes decorated with coloured tissue, sparkly crowns and woolly sheep masks. Everywhere we went happy children

could be seen going up the road baaing behind their masks or proudly marching in their crowns. The team fitting solar panels fed-back about what little they had at home; therefore, these items would be something they would treasure.

All the time spent serving these children has given me an experience that will stay with me forever

MY EXPERIENCE OF RWANDA – PAULINE WALLACE

I eventually decided to join the trip to Rwanda after much consideration and some trepidation. I had many reservations, some around what I could actually offer to the people of Rwanda and others around health, safety, travel, food, toilets, accommodation etc etc. A friend challenged me with the question – “How much do you really trust God?” And so, on 25th June 2023 I embarked, along with 13 others on the very memorable trip to Rwanda.

Over the next 12 days my life was enriched and changed – why had I been so anxious? God keeps His promises and His faithfulness is never lacking. I, along with the other two ‘older ladies’ found we had much to offer. Known as ‘The Grandmothers’ we entered into the world of Rwandan nursery schools with joy and excitement. I discovered that the experience I had acquired over 30 years of helping and leading in Sunday School, youth work, toddler groups etc was all that was needed to equip me with the skills required.

I consider myself, and have been told by others, that I’m essentially a practical and not an emotional person. However, I challenge anyone to visit Rwanda and not be moved by the welcome and enthusiasm of the people there. People who have so very little and yet willing to share what they have. Seeing children with absolutely no toys, barely enough to eat, no comfortable shoes or clothes, very poor housing, but happy, joyful and loving is humbling. Knowing we could do so very little was difficult, but changing just one day for over 500 children in total feels worthwhile – we made a difference to each one of those children in a very small way.

What We Actually Did

We served in four large nursery schools and one Saturday school at Kamembe Cathedral. The four rural nursery schools were all in the Diocese of Cyangugu and the children attending were extremely poor, particularly on the Island of Ishywa . We spent several hours with each group and with the help of our very able interpreter Maurice, were able to lead singing, tell and act out stories, play outdoor games with the huge parachutes we took with us, and provide many different craft activities.

It was immediately obvious that the nursery schools were equipped with little more than basic wooden tables and chairs, some chalk and a blackboard. There were no books, toys or resources for learning. The nursery on Ishywa had 74 children registered and one teacher. We took crayons, paper, paints, glue and the many resources needed for making sheep masks, fish pictures, hand painted under water scenes, crowns and general colouring along with a parachute and balls for each group. We were able to leave a supply of the craft materials at each venue for their continuing use. Sadly we know that once those items have been used up they will not be replaced. We were asked on more than one occasion if we would be able to provide resources for them in the future.

On several occasions we met with Mother’s Union members. MU is very active in Rwanda and we were shown a sewing project set up for single mothers to enable them to earn a small income by sewing. We also had some discussion with Eva, the wife of the Bishop of Cyangugu Diocese about the ways in which MU is trying to help with the education of young people. There is particular concern that teenage pregnancy is increasing, leading to girls being ostracised from their families and the father of the baby abandoning the mother. Education around relationships, sex, contraception, the treatment of women and healthy marriage is a high priority for MU in Rwanda.

WISBECH AND NORTH NENE PARISHES

Wendy Smith Branch Leader



After our June meeting we thought we would have some light entertainment by amusing ourselves playing some games, some old and some not so old!

It was to be the last branch meeting that Mrs Lillian Brigden attended as she died at the end of July 2023 aged 85. At her recent memorial service friends heard more about other parts of her life.



Her career began as a professional dancer. During that time, she became a tiller girl and also was included in the Esther Williams synchronised swimming shows, which travelled from Blackpool to London.

She was a good seamstress and when the current Venerable David Fleming left Wisbech St. Mary church as their parish priest she made a cope for him, which he wore at her memorial service.

Throughout most of her life she had a rock-solid faith in God, which shone from her. This led to her becoming a Lay Reader, through which she conducted many local funerals.

Lilian was a Mothers' Union member for many years and served on both branch and deanery committees. The last branch meeting she attended was less than three weeks before her death.

A lovely upright lady (due to her dancing skills!) and a privilege to know.



It may have been “Holiday Time”, but items for the Refuges, Hostels and Mary’s Child have been delivered, as have knitted items to Hinchinbrooke Hospital.



Baby hats were enthusiastically received at the Maternity Unit when delivered by Audrey Kirk. The midwives expressed a particular preference for hats with rib, either entirely, or with a generous band as they stretch more easily to fit over a young head. Also they mentioned they have more larger babies being delivered, so 0-3 month size as well as newborn are welcomed.

We took 3 big bags of lap blankets, and bags cannula sleeves to dementia Specialist Sherly. than our usual teddies had been requested, so pleased to be asked. There will now be a need for these.



of teddies and These larger and we were continuing



I asked Sherly about the use of the sleeves and muffs-

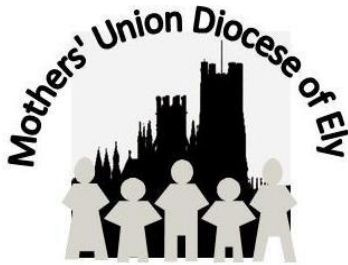
*“When we use the sleeves to cover an intravenous cannula it's used as a **distraction therapy**, and stops them from pulling it out, It calms a distressed patient instantly and that's a huge success.*

The bright colours, on the blankets and the muffs promotes participation, stimulates appetite and promotes relaxation.

That is just some of the benefits from these knitted products. They are in great demand; as soon as you give them to us, we distribute them to the wards, and we keep getting calls for more!”

So, please keep those needles clacking knowing how much your work is appreciated.

Happy Knitting!



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2023



HOW WELL DO YOU READ YOUR MOTHERS' UNION PRAYER DIARY?

Edward Bear Group at Ely Cathedral were influenced by the picture of the 2,000 year old tree in the Prayer Diary section for September. The story of the dove returning to Noah with the olive sprig, inspired us to make an oil collection for the Foodbank as our Harvest contribution this year.

MU Diocesan Autumn Meeting on Saturday October 14th

Waterbeach Church Hall 9.30am for 10am start

Speaker: Revd. Matthew Bradbury on Modern Slavery

Reports from Task Group Leaders/Bring packed lunch/ Parking next to hall

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union
Charity no. 251394

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

Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com

Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com

THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on
October 19th Zoom 10.30am

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89847170351?pwd=TTswqNI3P84OFrcurFdtbmOJ3PCz7X.1>

Meeting ID: 898 4717 0351

Passcode: 201420



16 Days of Activism 2023

RISE UP *against domestic abuse*

RESPOND INFORM SUPPORT EMPOWER UNITE PRAYER

Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it.

Ezra 10:4

Most of you will have received your copy of Connected magazine within the last two weeks. If you read pages 18 -19 you will see all the details about the Rise Up Domestic Abuse Campaign. There are suggestions for how your branch could show support for this campaign which begins on November 25th. This will also be the day that mothers' Union members and supporters meet together at Ely Cathedral at 12.15pm for a silent vigil. This will be followed by a minute's silence outside the main door at 1.03pm to help raise awareness of the fact that 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Do come to join us if you can.

RISE UP posters will be available at the Diocesan meeting for display in your church or village hall.

Also in **CONNECTED** from page 26 onwards are the details and photographs of the **Christmas cards, diaries and calendars with an order form**. Branches and individuals can either get in touch with me, order online for themselves or get together as a branch and put in a branch order. If your order is over £60 postage is free. Please remember to put Ely in as your diocese so that we can receive a branch related grant. *Hazel*

If you **have not** received your copy of CONNECTED, please get in touch with Ros (contact details on the front page) of this newsletter.

Many churches will celebrate **Prison's Week** in their service on October 8th. Burwell Radio will have a special edition of CrossTalk featuring inmates from Littlehay prison who have contributed items and chosen music for the programme. Revd Paula Spalding, our Diocesan Chaplain has put the programme together. If you would like to hear it put Burwell Radio into your search engine and it is the first thing you will see. The 30-minute programme airs on Sunday at 8.30am and 4.30pm then on Monday at 7pm.

St Neots Branch

Eileen Newman celebrated her 90th birthday on 2nd October and Pauline Keatley, for many years a member of Somersham branch and our oldest member celebrated her 96th birthday on 29th September.

AFIA

We received this from an 8 year old boy who went on one of our holidays at the end of August –

“The Searles Leisure resort was ‘supercalifragilisticexpialadocious’ and was the best holiday place I’ve ever been at and if I had enough money I would buy the entire place and the train was so cool when it went everywhere even out of the resort. And I am really grateful that they gave us free pocket money which I used to go to the arcade, fish n chips and the plaza.”

His Mum added -

All the best and may you give many more families like we this kind of holiday. Thank you very much again and God bless you all.

We have 4 families booked for half term week in October. Do please pray for them

Baby Tent

Maureen and her team were at the Gransden Show. Thank you Maureen, and your team of helpers, for keeping Mother’s Union prominent at this event.

‘I was amazed at how many families came to change nappies and feed babies. Often two or three nappies being changed at the same time. A break for some toddlers too so that they could just sit and play with toys. We saw a lovely model of Big Ben from a young boy who loves clocks.

Next year we are going to try to count how many families used the facility. Hazel



Annual Gathering

A comment from one of the attendees.

‘I couldn't get to sleep last night, my mind was just buzzing, the meeting was so positive and vibrant. Both Sheran and Bishop Emma putting Christ at the forefront of all we do, then for the same message to be repeated so enthusiastically by Archbishop Stephen. What a perfect replacement for Sentanu- he has fire! It's

food for thought but the underlying message was more members needed, and getting our clergy and churches working alongside us. Some great ideas with Rise Up for 16 Day's.

OUR Christmas Giving Wish list

While we support all year with toiletries, household and cleaning items, we do make a special appeal at Christmas.

The 3 Women's Refuges and the 2 young people's Hostels we support particularly like to have Shop Gift Vouchers at this time of year, as this enables them to give their clients the Gift of Choice. Mid Cambs. Refuge would also be grateful for new single bedding sets.



Mary' Child, The Charity project we support in Farcet & Stanground, would appreciate boxes of chocolates, biscuits, boxed toiletries and children's selection boxes.

Our contacts and the preferred stores vouchers for each are-

<p>Mid-Cambs Refuge Liz Elson 01480 211726 jimelson@talktalk.net Iceland, Tesco, Lidl</p>	<p>Fenland Refuge Sue Claydon 01354 654214 sueclaydon112@gmail.com Asda, Aldi</p>
<p>Cambridge Women's Aid (CWA) 01223 35000764 housekeeper@cambridgewa.org.uk Any store vouchers</p>	<p>Mary's Child Maureen Haigh 01353 749760 gmhaigh@talk21.com Gift boxes as above</p>
<p>Whitworth House (young women) Jo Wibberley 01223248728 jowibs.mu@gmail.com Primark</p>	<p>Wheatsheaf Close, young people) Jean Webb 01353 658581 Jmw35n@gmail.com Aldi, Tesco</p>

Thank you for all you do to support families in difficult circumstances.

We enjoy reading about some of the meetings and events that have taken place and often receive photos and information after the event. It would be great if we knew about the **special events in advance** too, as it gives other members, who would like to attend, the opportunity to do so. Not all areas have a Mary Sumner Day Service or a Christmas Mothers' Union celebration and with an increasing number of Diocesan members it would be something that many might enjoy attending.

Hazel

BANNERS. The trustees have the opportunity to stage a Festival of Banners (MU of course) in the Cathedral next August. It would need the support of our branches bringing banners to display and maybe other items. Start thinking about whether you would like to be involved. More next month.

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (23rd September)

My thoughts this month are going to open with an admission – although I received, and read, the “Connected” magazine for Spring 2023, I have only just noticed the words on the front cover: “I love you, I call you, I choose you”. They reference an article inside titled “Loved, Called and Chosen” contributed by Caroline Welby. I do not intend to precis it here, but I do suggest you read it if you haven’t already done so. It was the words on the cover that struck me so forcibly.

“I love you, I call you, I choose you”. When I saw them, my immediate reaction was of a feeling of being overwhelmed. I could visualise God calling these words to me and the impact of them. I know we read the Bible and study in many ways what we are supposed to do and how we are supposed to do it, but everything is in those words – “I love you, I call you, I choose you.” Each phrase on its own is powerful but together, well, “awesome” is an overused word but applies in this case.

We know God loves us; it is everywhere in the Bible. But put in the first person gives it an added depth of meaning. I can hear Him saying it to me, personally, and am struck dumb. God loves me; in spite of all my faults and failings, He loves me. Alleluia!

We also know God calls us. We are told in the Bible that we have roles, strengths and skills; that we all have our contribution to the whole and that together we make the whole body; that we all depend on each other. But here God says to each of us that He calls us personally, He knows our names and talents (He gave them to us!) just as He knows our actions and even our thoughts. Again, in spite of our imperfections, He is calling each one of us to Him, to serve Him and ultimately to be with Him. We are called because He needs us. That makes me feel very small, that the almighty God should call me because He needs me, personally.

And then He also chooses us. Out of all the people in the world, me, you, are His chosen ones, all of us who believe in Him and, recognising our failings, ask for forgiveness through His grace. God is speaking to each one of us as His chosen ones. We have our roles and tasks to perform, as individuals and collectively, we are loved, called and chosen to do His work. In Deuteronomy 7:7-16 you can read that the Lord chose each of us because He loves each of us. It is also worth recalling that according to John 15:16 we do not choose God, but God chooses us.

All this raced through my mind on reading those few words. One speaks of the power of the written word; never can there be a few words as powerful as these: “I love you, I call you, I choose you” when put as said by God to each one of us.

I was especially grateful to find these words today (or did they find me?) as it is the third anniversary of Susan passing, and I was experiencing that sense of aloneness that washes over one from time to time. But these words reminded me that I am not alone but very much wanted, which was exactly what I needed! The power of words indeed!



WHITWORTH TRUST

AGM

Tuesday 17th October 2023

6.30pm

Little St. Mary's Church Parish

Centre. Cambridge

RSVP

whitworthtrust@gmail.com

CELEBRATE, SUPPORT, SHARE



Debbie Tye - Communications

Anti-Slavery Day/Black History Month.

Professor Dame Sara Thornton will speak on “Modern Slavery: Hidden in Plain Sight”, at a Ben Jupp Memorial Lecture in association with Ely Amnesty Group, in the north transept of Ely Cathedral on Sunday 8 October at 5.30pm.

No tickets are required for this event. Entry is free. There will be a retiring collection for the work of Amnesty. More info here: <https://www.elycathedral.org/events/sara-thornton-lecture>

Further details about Anti-Slavery Day (18 October) on Ely Diocesan website: <https://www.elydiocese.org/about/news-jobs-and-events/news-and-announcements/news/anti-slavery-day-resources>

Sadly, due to a bereavement, the planned events at Soham Parish Church for Black History Month focussing on the abolition of the British slave trade have had to be postponed until Spring 2024. More info will be available then.

Resources for Black History month (October): <https://www.elydiocese.org/about/news-jobs-and-events/news-and-announcements/news/events-and-resources-for-black-history-month>

CLEWER INTIATIVE

Mothers' Union are working with the Clewer Initiative to end modern slavery by 2030. Both Mothers' Union and the Clewer Initiative believe that the tools to end modern day slavery already exist within our local communities. We envision that the Church, which is present and at the heart of communities, has a primary responsibility in leading this effort.

The Clewer Initiative is a project that enables the Church of England and its wider networks to develop strategies to detect modern day slavery in their communities. They can then help provide victim support and care. This involves working with the Church locally to identify resources already available to be utilised. Also, there is a focus on developing partnerships with others and thus creating a wider network of advocates seeking to end modern slavery.

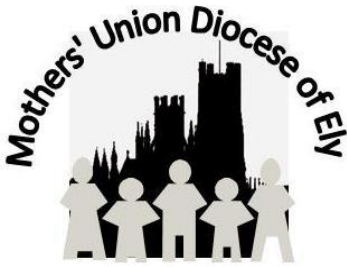
On a more national level the initiative is developing a network of practitioners who are committed to sharing models of best practice and providing evidence-based data to resource the Church's national engagement with Government, statutory and non-statutory bodies.

Read more on the MU website: <https://www.mothersunion.org/projects/mothers-union-and-clewer>

And on the Clewer website: <https://theclewerinitiative.org/> where you can sign up to a monthly Newsletter as well to receive latest info about their work.

On Sunday 15 October there is a Special National Service for Anti-Slavery Day, which will focus on the link between modern slavery and refugees. It will be led by the Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover, and will come from the Huguenot Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral. Bishop Rose will also provide the sermon. It will be streamed on the C of E website, and available to watch from 9am.

Follow this link for more info: <https://theclewerinitiative.org/blog/hosting-the-national-online-service> or go to the C of E website page for online services: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/church-online>



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

November

Newsletter 2023

ELY DIOCESAN AUTUMN MEETING



There is more about what the MU stands for, many resources, and the campaigns on the MU website.

We heard of some of the work of the Task Groups: Faith in Action has been able to send 12 families on an AFIA holiday this year, often their first break for years and sometimes ever; Praying our Faith producing Prayer diaries and organising Quiet Days one of which our Chaplain Paula will lead next spring; Communications – maintaining the flow of information in a variety of ways as well as organising events for members who do not have a local Branch.

We also heard from Canon Matthew Bradbury about Modern Slavery. Matthew delivered a fascinating outline of the unbelievable things going on under our eyes – evil in plain sight – and he also gave an insight into the history of slavery.

A REFLECTION for NOVEMBER

Philip Baker

When I was young, admittedly some time ago now, there used to be a saying – “there’s none so queer as folk” – often said with a rolling of the eyes. I expect you remember it too and it referred to the strange propensity for people to do the most peculiar and unexpected things. One of my grandchildren reminded me that nothing much changes except the language when she recently used the phrase “some people are weird” in exactly the same context (and with the rolling of the eyes).

But however we express it, the fact remains that people sometimes really are difficult to fathom. I am going to apply this thought to our belief in God, God the Creator and Maker of everything in heaven and on earth, including us. God offers us a complete explanation for everything. He made it and it works, what else do we need to know? If we knew everything, we would be God and that is clearly very unlikely! And suppose that somehow we did know everything, what would we do with that knowledge? – knowing humanity I suspect we would find a way of spoiling it! No, better the way it is.

So we have an explanation for how the world came to be and how it was populated by God for everyone to believe, but what do some do instead? They come up with ever more fanciful ideas which are statistically less likely than the simple one they have rejected! Let us take as an example the Big Bang theory of how the universe formed. This theory is very simple and stood for some time. The theory was that we are in a cycle which started in the infinite past, with all the matter in the universe existing on a pin head and exploding. As it all expanded planets formed, life appeared from the chemical sludge and developed to us. At some point in the future the universe will start to contract until all matter again sits on a pin head. And, as the knitting patterns say, Repeat. Into the infinite future. However, this does not explain where the matter initially came from, what made it go bang, in what space does it exist and, the big one, why? Sadly for them, scientists now believe that there is not enough matter in the universe to make the cycle repeat, so now they think the last “big bang” was the first and last, which somewhat upsets the theory as it leads to the question of what was there before the big bang, where did all this matter suddenly come from and why was it so tightly compressed? And yet, belief in God solves all that, giving us both an explanation and a reason.

Why do people have such trouble with the obvious? Why are they so weird? Over the centuries people have believed in gods being in almost anything imaginable, from cows to the moon. There are programmes on television about visitors from space (yes, seriously, people have seen them and their flying machines) and about ghostly appearances and apparitions and restless spirits. But if you believe in any of these things, you have to obliterate the God which we believe is behind everything and who is the only one among all the other contenders who lays claim to love us as His own, to offer succour to us when we are needy and to give us eternal life with Him, provided we keep to His way. Why would people not believe in that in preference to anything else? Anyway, none of these alternatives can seriously be considered to have created the universe! Something like a cow, perhaps?

As with most things, whilst we can conjure up all sorts of complex theories, the simple solution is best: God created all things and like all creations there will have been a purpose. We do not need to understand that purpose, indeed we probably would not be able to. Let us just accept the simple truth of God and pray that all peoples will find Him. What a wonderful world that would be!

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on Zoom
10.30am on November 23rd**

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

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

**Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union
Charity no. 251394**

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com



In photos of Mothers' Union members in African countries they are usually wearing their blue and white uniforms. While the three members from Yaxley were in Rwanda in July, they decided to bring me a gift of Mothers' Union fabric. I have now made this into a skirt, some of you will have seen it at the October meeting in Waterbeach. *Irene*



YAXLEY OCTOBER MEETING

Ros Wright brought her display of crosses and talked on "Christ's Cross in the World" This was a very enjoyable meeting with some very profound thoughts on some of the crosses from our members.

WORLDWIDE

Shyogwe Diocese in Rwanda now has a new Mothers' Union coordinator. Thank you to Rev Claudine Mukawena, who will continue in her parish as Pastor and welcome to Clementine Dushimimana, who has taken over as the new Mothers' Union worker for Shyogwe Diocese.

Granta Deanery Advent Service

10.30am Tuesday 5 December 2023

St Mary's, Sawston

All Welcome



The **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence** begins on 25th November, and as usual there will be displays in Ely Cathedral, this time in the South Transept. The Faith In Action display will highlight how we in Ely Diocese support the 3 Refuges and other victims of domestic abuse. My hope is that the displays will encourage others to **Rise Up Against Domestic Abuse**, with us, our theme for this year.

November 25th will also be the day that Mothers' Union members and supporters meet together at Ely Cathedral at 12.15pm for a silent vigil. This will be followed by a minute's silence outside the main door at 1.03pm to help raise awareness of the fact that 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Do come to join us if you can or hold a silence and prayers in your own branch.

We are now working with Property Angels (to be known as Angel Foundation UK, when granted charity status). They work to provide basic items for setting up a new home for abuse victims. They need beds – double and single, preferably divans, settees, coffee and bedside tables, chest of drawers, washing machines, fridge-freezers and “hoovers”. Please contact me if you have anything to give – they can collect.

Although we support the Refuges 365 days a year, it is very apt that we make a special effort to support with Gift Vouchers for Christmas, within the 16 Days Campaign. Is your branch making a special effort for this? If not, please consider doing so. Details in last month's newsletter.

Thank you for all the bags of goodies given to me at the Diocesan Meeting. Lovely knitting, most has now been delivered.

Your branch leader will have my contact details.

BANNER FESTIVAL 2024

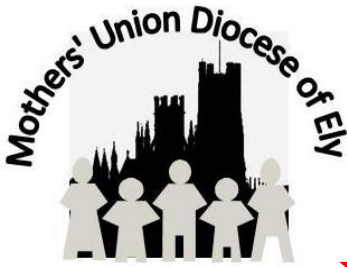
The Ely MU Diocese will be staging a Festival of Banners (MU of course) in Ely Cathedral 1st – 14th August in the Lady Chapel. This would need the support of branches bringing banners to display and maybe other items. Please decide as a branch whether you would like to take part.

Forms asking for information will be sent out to branches in January.

It is also proposed to hold a Mary Sumner Day Service in the Cathedral on Friday 9th August at 11.30am. It is possible that members can eat packed lunches in the Lady Chapel and drinks will be available.

WAVE OF PRAYER DATES

The dates for Ely Diocese are **December 10th – 12th**. Prayers will be available later this month for use by branches, diocese or individuals to remember our link diocese of Lusaka, Shyogwe, Sokoto, Ikka and Karimnagar.



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.

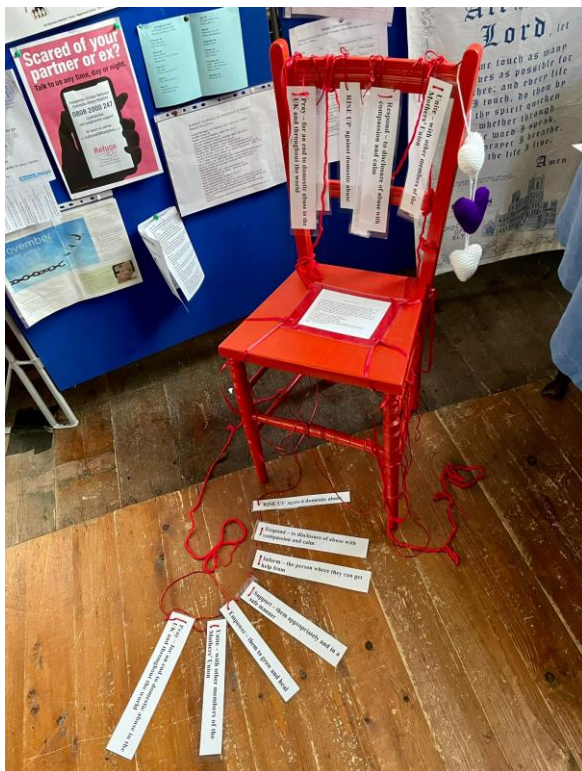
Many churches across the diocese have displays on the theme of Domestic Abuse including the Rise Up campaign which gives information and help and the Red Chair Project that raises awareness too.

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.



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 21st.**

<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.

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.

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

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!

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.

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

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**