



**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

# MARCH NEWSLETTER 2024



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

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

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

*Who have enabled our branch to flourish.*

*Amen*

## **Ely Cathedral Branch**

*Gail Swanson Branch Leader*

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

**THURSDAY PRAYER** in Ely Cathedral and on  
Zoom 10.30am on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2024

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

Meeting ID: 843 9969 0933

Passcode: 835537

This is not the usual ID for Thursday Prayer

## **BANNER EXHIBITION**

**1<sup>ST</sup> – 14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2024**

### **ELY CATHEDRAL**

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

## **SPRING DIOCESAN MEETING and AGM**

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

**Speaker RUTH NEW Ely Diocesan Development Officer for Children and Families**

**Displays, MU cards.**

**Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be supplied**

## Faith In Action – March '24

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

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

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

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

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

Esther wrote -

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

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

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

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

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

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



## A REFLECTION – MU – March

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Philip Baker*

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

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

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



## Worldwide News

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

### ANGLICAN CHURCH OF RWANDA, KIGALI DIOCESE

#### SOME OF MOTHERS' UNION ACTIVITIES 2023

##### Induction of New Members

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



##### Ministry to the vulnerable

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



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



## Bible study classes

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



Members during bible study class.

## GBV Campaign (Gender Based Violence)

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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