



NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER
JANUARY



The 150 Fund Challenge

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

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

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



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

Come and Celebrate our 150th Anniversary

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

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

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

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

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

MU Pictures and Prose Anthology for 150th Anniversary.

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

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

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

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

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

Any queries, please contact Debbie Tye on: MUelyDiocese@hotmail.com or 01353 666883.

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

Ely Diocesan M U contacts
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846
roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 07747022431
hwill66@icloud.com

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

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

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



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

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

Best wishes Julieanne Long



Dear members

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

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

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

Please send them to this address;

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

No later than Friday 27th March 2026.

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

Thank you.

Best Wishes.

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

SHINGAY DEANERY MOTHERS UNION

Dear Hazel

It is with sadness that I have to report the closure of our MU branch, Shingay Deanery Mothers Union. We have tried to keep it going but lack of members has made it very difficult.

Our last meeting will be our Advent service in December.

Most of our members are planning to become Diocesan Members.

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

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

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

With Best Wishes

Diane Blundell

Shingay Deanery Mothers Union

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

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

Hazel Williams

Prayer Diaries

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

A REFLECTION

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

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

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

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

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

Philip Baker (25th November 2025)

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

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

CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025.

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

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

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

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

Get ready for our 150th Anniversary!

Key B&I Anniversary Events

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Expression of Interest Deadline extended to 5th December 2025

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

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

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KgEiaMHN70WD2D_OF7LJmiQpvzaf_i1HmrpbaAG3odZUNEIDRDE4M1A0M1g0VE9JT09HSUtLUDhTSC4u

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

Celebrating Christmas with MU faith resources

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

Please visit the resources page on our new website www.mothersunion.org/resources

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



16 Days of Violence Against Gender Based Violence and Rise Up



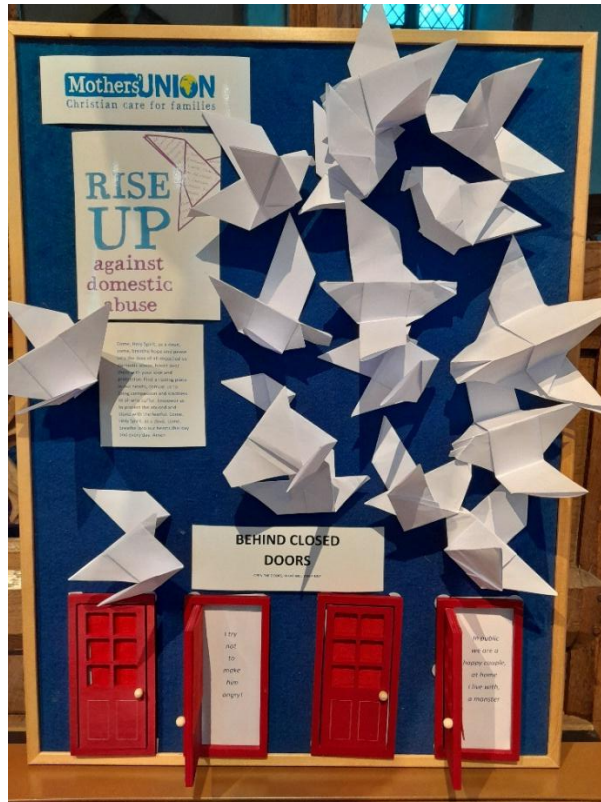
Members met for a 30 min. Prayer Vigil at Ely Cathedral on a wet and windy Saturday. We gathered outside for a Banner Witness afterwards and were delighted that Bishop Dagmar was able to join us. Our thanks go to Michelle Baxter for her help with the display. First ever use of a digital screen for Ely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



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

Yaxley Branch

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



MU Serving Refreshments at Ely Diocesan Synod Meetings.

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

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

The dates for 2026 are:

Saturday 14 March: 9am-1pm.

Thursday 18 June: 6.45pm-9pm.

Saturday 10 October: 9am-1pm.



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

