

Newsletter March 2025



HRH Duchess of Edinburgh Is the new Patron of the Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union has had the privilege of enjoying royal patronage since its foundation in 1876, and we are delighted, as we approach our 150th Anniversary in 2026, that Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Edinburgh, has accepted the invitation to continue this tradition.

"We are honoured that Her Royal Highness has chosen to join us as patron," says **Mothers' Union Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow**. "The Duchess will bring strength and inspiration for the work we all do. We are especially grateful for Her Royal Highness's experience and commitment to championing the most marginalised, particularly those who are impacted by violence and abuse in conflict, a cause we are passionate about, because conflict disproportionately affects women and children. As a woman-led movement, we also greatly welcome The Duchess's commitment to promoting the development of women into leadership."

All members, family and friends are invited to our

COMMISSIONING SERVICE

St. Mary's Church, Ely

Saturday March 22nd at 2pm

Celebrant and Preacher

Rt Revd. Dr Dagmar Winter, Bishop of Huntingdon

Banners will be paraded.

Tea and Cake.

MUe cards on sale.

Having seen so many banners on display in the Cathedral last year it would be wonderful to see them again at our Commissioning Service for trustees and leaders.

Lady Day at All Saints' Parish Church, St Ives

All Saints', St Ives will be hosting a Lady Day Service on Tuesday **25th of March** at 2.30pm. It will be in the form of a Communion Service followed by Afternoon Tea. If members of your branch would like to attend, please could you contact Deirdre Milner by email to deejmilner@sky.com.

Lady Day Service Littleport

This year St George's Littleport are hosting the Lady Day service on Tuesday **March 25th** at 2.30. It will be a communion service led by our vicar, Natalie Andrews followed by light refreshments in the church hall. Please can branch secretaries send rough numbers of those attending to Julieanne Long julianne@textileartist.co.uk



FFF

Near the beginning of each month you receive the Families Faith and Fun pages written by Ros Wright. I know these are put in churches, sent to grandchildren and used by children's workers.

You will see here that Peter Smith, a children's worker from All Saint's Church St. Ives, used the St Nicholas Craft Activity from December with his children.

Quiet Day
Wednesday 2nd April at
Waterbeach
10am for 10.30 start/ 3pm finish
Ros Wright will be running the
session
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Advance Notice
Quiet Day
Wednesday 17th September

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

Make a Mother's Day Appeal
Celebrate Mothering Sunday with a Gift that Changes Lives

Mothering Sunday is a time to reflect, remember, and celebrate the women who nurture and guide us. But for many families around the world, home is not always a place of peace.

In the Solomon Islands, over 85% of children experience violent discipline. Parents long for a better way—to create harmony, to teach love, and to build a future where their children can flourish. Through Mothers' Union's Worldwide Parenting Programme, we are making that hope a reality.

Sidonia, a mother and now a grandmother, saw her family transformed after attending a Mothers' Union parenting course:

"Before, our home was filled with conflict. Now, we live in peace. My children have learned to share, and my husband has given up drinking. I thank God every day for this change.

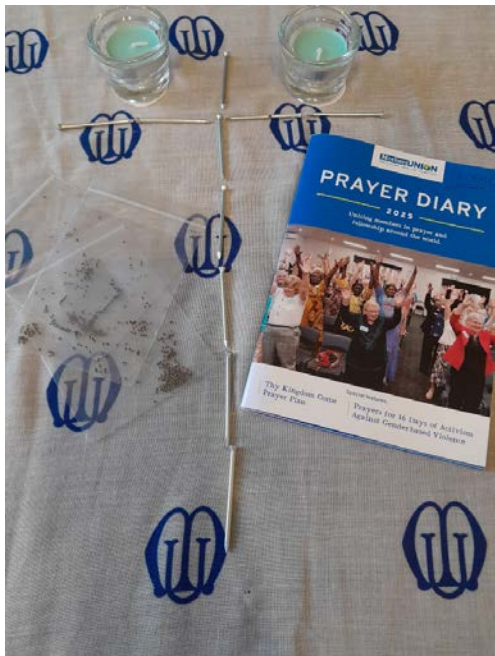
This Mothering Sunday, you can bring peace to more families by [purchasing an ethical Gift of Peace](#). Each gift helps parents gain the skills they need to create loving, stable homes for their children.

I was really inspired by the use of the **2025 Prayer Diary** in their meeting at Yaxley. We are going to follow it at our branch meeting in March, when we unexpectedly have a vacant slot. If you would also like to do this Irene has a more detailed plan which she has sent to me and I am happy to forward on if you get in touch. It might help us all to use the diary more regularly.

Hazel

Yaxley Branch

Irene Porter



For our **February meeting**, Yaxley branch members all brought copies of the 2025 Prayer Diary. We looked at the focus of each month and the new features this year's diary contains. We all read the January monthly prayer and discussed the creative prayer activity. The February reflection starts with "May we bloom where we are planted" Everyone was given a small bag of cress seeds to encourage them to try the creative prayer. With Mothering Sunday in March, the "Make a Mothers' Day" appeal leaflet was hi-lighted. Following the first line of the monthly prayer for April "Lord, I light a candle as a symbol of love" candle holders and candles were given to everyone. It was suggested that the cress seeds, for February, could be sown in the holders. May, "Thy Kingdom Come" we sang "We seek your Kingdom" (To Abide with me), held up our hands for "pray for 5 and invite 1" just like the ladies in the picture.

Our clergy will feel supported if members do as the creative prayer for June suggests. At this point in the diaries several people found that the centre page is becoming loose, one had been lost completely, hopefully not an intended feature! One thing that is missing this year, is the map. Looking at the seaside donkeys for July, we thought about the AFIA holidays and sang "We're all going on a summer holiday" , after which we decided that we didn't sound much like Cliff Richards. We also thought about not everyone being able to go on a summer holiday. The creative prayer in August helps us think about our founder Mary Sumner, and enjoy eating sweets. The Power of Reconciliation for September, some had heard of "The Community of the Cross of Nails" We placed nails in the shape of the cross. October looks at those in prison and those who are persecuted. We thought about our links in Nigeria and India who are both high on the Opens Doors list of persecuted churches. November's picture of the shoes and the reflection will help to prepare for the "16 Days" later in the month. December, Invitations and gifts, everyone was invited to use their Prayer Diaries, daily, weekly or monthly and to fill in the prayer requests and "Things I'm Thankful For" on the last pages. We finished with our Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow's message on the back cover.

**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on
Zoom 10.30am on 20th March**

Ros Wright

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BR LZDIK.1>

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628

Passcode: 080127

**ADVANCE NOTICE - Spring Diocesan meeting and AGM
will take place at St. Peter's Church, March on Saturday
25th April at 9.30am for 10am.**

Nick Keen will also be talking about the work of MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship).

If you have any picture postcards (either new or used) please bring them to the meeting or give to someone who is coming)

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye

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

“MU Working with People of All Faiths and None”. Led by Debbie Tye.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytyELsv-swc>

We lost the signal with the Cathedral during the zoom connection, meaning some of the recording had to be redone and edited, so apologies for any unexpected pauses in the video.

The next Thursday Prayer Service is on 20th March, and because of some planned work taking place in The Almonry, alternative arrangements for having coffee after the service may have to be made, which will be announced on the day.

Also, if you coming to the Cathedral then, just to let you know there will be a Lunchtime Concert at 1.10pm, with a piano recital from Christopher Seed. Musicians from The King’s School Ely will be performing on 13th March. More info here: <https://www.elycathedral.org/music/concerts-and-recitals/lunchtime-concerts>



Thank you for those who responded so quickly to the request for brightly coloured lap blankets, for a trial to reduce falls, at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.



**MU RESOURCES FOR LENT AND EASTER
“LIVING HOPE”**

The Mothers’ Union Lent theme for 2025 is Living Hope. This theme invites us to reflect deeply on the hope we have in Christ, even as we walk through the challenges and complexities of life. During Lent, we are called to journey with Jesus along the difficult road that leads to the cross, a road marked by sacrifice, pain, and ultimately, redemption. It is a journey that resonates with the struggles we face in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

MU has produced a new Lent Calendar and there is a reflection, poem and prayers, as well as a Holy Week and Easter meditation.

As we focus on Living Hope this Lent, maybe choose one resource and journey with it. Lent isn’t about doing everything; it’s an opportunity to prepare for Christ’s Resurrection on Easter Sunday. A season to grow in hope and draw closer to God.

Follow this link for the resources: <https://www.mothersunion.org/news/welcome-lent>

The Church of England also has a lot of info on its website

here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/living-hope-resources-lent-2025>

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (17th February 2025)

Have you noticed how frequently the number 40 crops up in the Bible? Moses spent 40 days on the mountain being prepared to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 24:18), culminating in the second set of stones bearing what we refer to as the 10 Commandments (Exodus 34:28 – the first set of stones Moses destroyed, see Exodus 32:15-20); the earth was flooded for 40 days to rid the earth of creatures except those saved in the ark (Genesis 7:12), and there are many more. On Ash Wednesday (which falls this year on 5th March) we enter the 40 days of Lent, which many suggest recalls the 40 days Jesus spent being tempted in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11) and is a period of contemplation culminating in the deeply contrasting events and emotions of Easter.

Our 40 days ends in the ultimate glory of Easter, and traditionally we mark it by denying ourselves something, such as chocolate. I have a suggestion. The Bible is interesting and reading it helps us to understand our faith so, for a change from the usual, instead of chocolate, how about giving up a little time each day to think of God and read the Bible? There are lots of plans available on line, although I use a completely free app on my phone (YouVersion) which offers several plans to choose from, including reading the whole Bible in 365 days (that is what I do and it takes around 15 minutes a day). Alternatively, try to read the first 24 chapters from the book of Exodus (which includes the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai) and all 28 chapters of the Gospel of Matthew (which is the story of Jesus up to His Resurrection at the end of our 40 days of Lent). That should be an easy read in 40 days. taking about 15 minutes each day for a chapter from each. If that is not enough (or instead), for a lovely story of faith and love read Ruth, which is really short.

Whatever we do, let us make sure we remember God's amazing love for us as shown by the sacrifice He made on the Cross, followed by His example of rising to life again.

Susan Baker Memorial Fund

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union, through the Susan Baker Memorial Fund, support capital costs for work with families of all generations in the Ely Diocese.

Ways we might support

Work with families from children to the elderly.

Resources for groups: e.g. books, audio visuals, art and craft materials, equipment, start-up costs, courses, administration, venue hire.

Maximum Grant available: £500. No more than one grant per year. Capital costs only (not salaries)

Application forms are available on the Mothers' Union section of the Diocese of Ely website: <https://www.elydiocese.org/church-in-action/mothers-union/> (after 10th March 2025) **or by email from Mrs Jean Webb:** jmw35n@gmail.com

Applications are invited for submission by the following dates with a decision to be notified after the subsequent Trustees meeting.

31st January 30th April 31st July 31st October

Completed application forms should be sent by email or post to:

Mrs Jean Webb, Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union, 35 Norfolk Road, Ely. CB6 3EJ.