

# 2020 December and January Newsletter



## Ely Cathedral Tree

A sight we are familiar with, taken just after Thursday prayers in December 2019. Things will be different this year both in the cathedral and in our home lives, but much will remain the same.

*As we begin our Advent journey we pray for holy guidance to lead us to the place of peace.*

*As we carry the burdens of the year gone by we pray for a lifting of our spirits.*

*On every step of our star-led way we pray for new grace for the year ahead.*

*In seeking the place of the Christ-child may we be ever aware that the risen Lord accompanies us every step of the way. Amen.*

- taken from Praying in every Season



### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 20201

Please pay subscriptions of £20 to your Branch or to Diocese (for Diocesan members) by Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>.

### WAVE OF PRAYER for Ely Diocese

10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Dec. Please remember to set aside time to pray for our link diocese. Prayer sheets have been distributed. If you wish to join other MU members on Zoom at 3pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December the ID is 818 0300 1106. By telephone ring 0203 901 7895, when prompted enter 818 0300 1106# Others across the world will be praying for us too.

Zoom ID for the Global Service at 10am on 5<sup>th</sup> December is 835 8609 0248 (last digit is not 3)

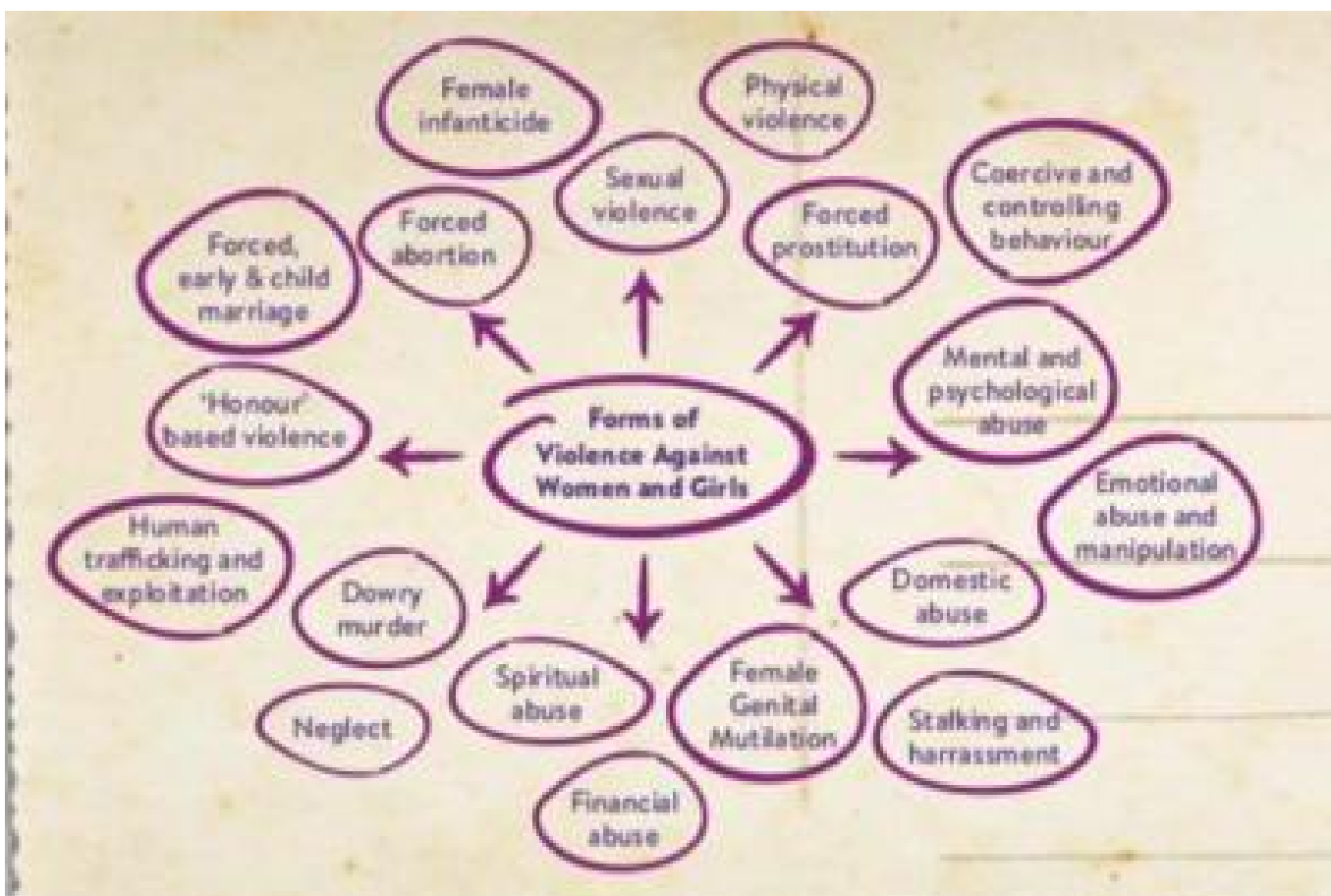


Like many other branches **Farcet** have been unable to meet for most of this year. They have kept themselves busy with knitting for a number of charities. The photograph shows Veronica with 6 knitted blankets, 2 knee blankets, a baby cot blanket and baby bonnets, only a small selection of the items given to Hope House for the homeless and the Tudors residential home.

They are looking forward to meeting after Easter and getting back to some sort of normality.

Thanks go too, to all the other members throughout the diocese who have been busy sewing and knitting this year to help those in need.

**During the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence** many members across the world will have been thinking and praying for girls and women who are suffering. It is not the same everywhere and below is a chart to remind us of all aspects.



**Global Day 2020 Service.**

This year the MU is celebrating the 16 days of Activism with a variety of events. As a diocese we plan to join together for a service on Zoom (ID 835 8609 0248) on Sat 5th December at 10am. We hope as many members as possible will be able to join together to worship as we pray for peace, especially in homes around the world.

## REFLECTION FOR DECEMBER

Philip Baker (26<sup>th</sup> November 2020)

Inspiration for provoking thought is not limited to the bible. In these far from normal times I have not limited my reading plan to that great book (although that would normally be enough on its own) but I am reading or re-reading a number of classics, including Robinson Crusoe (which I am not sure I have ever read beyond children's versions and which I thoroughly recommend).

The following extract is on his recovering from a serious illness some years after his shipwreck and arrival on his island (my apologies for it being so long, but Mr Defoe cannot be accused of brevity in his literary style):

*I missed the fit for good and all, though I did not recover my full strength for some weeks after. While I was thus gathering strength, my thoughts ran exceedingly upon this scripture, "I will deliver thee;" and the impossibility of my deliverance lay much upon my mind, in bar of my ever expecting it: but as I was discouraging myself with such thoughts, it occurred to my mind, that I pored so much upon my deliverance from the main affliction (ie to be rescued from the island), that I disregarded the deliverance I had received; and I was, as it were, made to ask myself such questions as these; viz. Have I not been delivered, and wonderfully too, from sickness? from the most distressed condition that could be, I had not owned and been thankful for that as a deliverance, and how could I expect greater deliverance? This touched my heart very much and immediately I kneeled down, and gave God thanks aloud, for my recovery from my sickness.*

How often do we make the mistake of failing to be grateful for what we do have rather than being angry or disappointed at not receiving what we wish for? God always answers our prayers, but not always as we expect, so we need to be on the lookout.

In my own situation I have found an extension of this principle to be very helpful: to be grateful and happy for the good times we had rather than to be angry and sad for the good times we might have had in the future. In fact, so much so that people are sometimes surprised at how positively I can express my thanks for the nearly 60 years of happiness Susan and I shared rather than regret at the sadness of it not still being the same.



**Susan's funeral was, as you would expect, very difficult for her family and we were all buoyed up by the huge amount of support given by you all, thank you. In addition to the limited number of those of us in church over 70 groups and individuals joined with us via Zoom which was amazing. All areas of Susan's life were represented, her relatives, church family, friends and neighbours, Mothers' Union contacts from everywhere and those we shared time with on the river. Over 200 people and groups have sent a card or letter, most mentioning some memorable occasion shared with Susan! All this shows how she connected with others and made an impact on lives. I am also now able to report that over £2000 has been donated in her memory to the Mothers' Union and it is my sincere hope that this will enable the impact she made to continue to be effective in some way. It is a truly magnificent sum and the family's appreciation goes to all who contributed to make it so.**

**Philip Baker**





## Thoughts on ADVENT

Helen Banyard

I love lights. Whether it's the warm rays of the sun, the bright flames of a bonfire or the twinkling lights on a Christmas tree. Light lifts my spirits and I feel happier. We are in Advent, the season before Christmas as we wait for the coming of the Christmas child. Do you have an Advent calendar and/or an Advent candle? As a small child I loved the anticipation of opening a numbered window or door throughout December till Christmas Eve. It was exciting to see what was behind the number for that day and let the light shine through the picture which was revealed, perhaps a cracker, a toy drum or a star. Then there was the flare of the flame as the match lit the wick of the Advent candle and watching the wax slowly melt away the small section for each day. (I still treat myself to this annual ritual - an important part of preparing for Christmas and the calendars and candles are sent to wherever my children/ grandchildren are - Shanghai and New York State this year).

This year we are surrounded by darkness- the pandemic looms large, alongside the ever-present wars, hunger, poverty, loss of employment, the effects of climate change, and the results of domestic and sexual abuse. It is important that we look forward to the Light before it comes. The calendar or candle can provide us with our own small light in this world which can feel hostile and forbidding. The light invites us to look beyond the darkness and to trust in our gift for God, in the new-born child, who lights up our heart, no matter how desperate we may feel. Be guided by the unexpected lights and those that refuse to be extinguished because God is always with us. The seasons of Advent and Christmas which fall in our midwinter give us the opportunity to become the bearers of a light, kindled by the Spirit, to give hope in a world of darkness.

December is a month of expectation, anticipation and hope. Christmas is God's gift to us of His son, who is visible and tangible to everyone who is looking and seeking. Let us share the mystery - to look beyond our lighted windowpane candles as part of our own Advent journey. We are invited to knock on the door and enter into the divine mystery as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" John 1 v5

## Zoom meetings information

**5<sup>th</sup> Dec. Global Day Service. 10am  
ID 835 8609 0248**

**11<sup>th</sup> Dec. Wave of Prayer 3pm  
ID 818 0300 1106**

**17<sup>th</sup> Dec. Thursday Prayer led by  
Angela Jones 10.30am on Worship  
and working with Mothers and  
Toddlers**

**ID 857 9631 9028**

**21<sup>st</sup> Jan. Thursday Prayer led by  
Hazel Williams 10.30am on New  
Start**

**ID 852 1960 4460**

**CONTACT DETAILS** Charity no. 251394

Ros home 01223 861846

[roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel home 01638 743897

[hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

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



# February Newsletter 2021

In the short term before we can meet and worship together there is much to be done through prayer, support and fellowship and witnessing to our faith in difficult times.

In the words of Paul, also written in lockdown, in Philippians 3: 12 -14

"I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus"



**Brampton MU branch** has tried to keep in touch with each other throughout 2020 with phone calls, online messages, letters and personal doorstep deliveries. We usually fund raise for MU through special events but this not being possible recently we wanted a special project to end the year. Through her work one of our members has contact with the Women's Refuge manager and we asked her to find out if there was a Christmas gift we could give to the Refuge. It was suggested that a pair of cosy slipper socks for each of the ladies would be well received. These were duly

purchased and beautifully wrapped and labelled by Julie Anderson. A pre-Christmas delivery was then made of the socks and we also included tins of chocolates for all the residents to share and some Christmas flowers to brighten the communal areas. Having had a talk from the Women's Refuge manager at our meeting in January 2020 we felt it was a nice way to end the year being able to give these Christmas gifts.

Please would Treasurers complete the annual returns for 2020 and send to Catherina Griffiths if they haven't already done so and also any money should be sent to Claire Booth. Everyone should have the addresses but if not please get in touch with Hazel.

**CONTACT DETAILS** Charity no. 251394

Ros home 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel home 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

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



## “Life During Lockdown” Photo Competition and YouTube Channel.

Some of you may have been wondering about the Photo Competition we ran during lockdown last year. Members were invited to submit up to 3 photos of something that meant anything to them throughout this time. We had so many lovely photos from people representing different aspects during the lockdown, with a variety of shots, capturing many meaningful subjects and memorable moments.

It had been planned that we might have a display when we met up for the Autumn Festival Day in October but that was not possible. **We have now set up a YouTube Channel which will enable you to see a video of the photos that were submitted.** It has been posted as an “unlisted” video which means it is “semi-private” and can only be seen if you have the link. You are welcome to share this with family and friends.

Here is the link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMuzeJuxz\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMuzeJuxz_c)

We had hoped to be able to vote for our favourite photos but this aspect of the competition is in abeyance for the moment, as not everyone will have internet to enable viewing online. It is possible that, if there is enough demand, we might be able to produce a DVD, available for a small donation, for members to keep as a record of our project. If anyone is interested, please let me know.

We will also be recording and posting videos of Thursday Prayers which can be shared with members, if you are unable to join in with the Zoom Meeting at the set time. Again this will work along the same lines as the photos video. Here is the link for the Global Service held in December for the 16 Days Campaign:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntjGsuLN790>

December Thursday Prayer: Worship and Working with Mothers and Toddlers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTzttFn6Svg>

More will be posted each month as and when available.

Hope you enjoy looking at the photos and videos.

*Debbie Tye, Communications Task Group Co-ordinator*

(01353 666883 / [dmtypost@hotmail.com](mailto:dmtypost@hotmail.com))



This is a photo of the gifts from the **March Deanery Branch** taken to the Fenland Refuge before Christmas. The gifts for children in the red wrapping, their selection boxes in the 'pudding' and 'reindeer' paper and the 'shiny' paper gifts for the women. One of our members donated the gingerbread house (which Jocelyn was thrilled with) and we bought the tub for the staff. At the moment there are 11 children and 12 women.

## REFLECTION FOR FEBRUARY

Philip Baker

About the time of writing this it is *already* 4 months since dear Susan passed away and I am *already* a quarter of the way through reading the bible, a task I set myself about 3 months ago. I say *already* since the intervening time seems to have passed very quickly whilst, at the time of the event or decision, both seemed to be challenges which I was not sure how to deal with. These are examples of how amazingly resilient we are as humans and how well we can cope with whatever life throws at us. Each such event or decision contributes to what we are, our identity, and taking any one away would make us a different person to who we are. Pip in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* puts it rather well - *"That was a memorable day for me, for it made great changes in me. But it is the same with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it, and think how different its course would have been. Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day."*

How different my life would have been without the riches Susan brought following our chance pairing in a lunchtime dance class at school. And the events consequent upon the moment Susan decided to follow her mother and become an active member of the Mothers' Union were transformative (in a good way) for us both. More recently, I remember the day I determined I was going to read the bible and now experience growing enlightenment every day from new passages. It is, in fact, so successful that I have now added reading the MU Prayer Diary every day and find it surprisingly rewarding, possibly as I am looking up where the places we pray for are in the world with some results which are surprise me!

If we can deal with the shock of losing someone so close to us, so that, unthinkable at the outset, we even become comfortable in that loss, or make decisions which appear at the start to be virtually impossible to achieve but which become by our perseverance almost easy, then there is surely nothing that, given the will to succeed, we cannot do. So take heart, there is hope even in the darkest of places and with God's grace success can come out of each decision we make and circumstance in which we find ourselves, however unlikely that may seem at the outset.

I leave you with a little challenge: to read Proverbs 8. It is written in praise of Wisdom, that essential but rare commodity. I have struggled with much of Proverbs but this makes eminent sense to me and I hope you find it so too. With the application of Wisdom at least the decisions we take, and our response to circumstances in which we find ourselves, have a better chance of happy outcomes and of making us better people of God.

Trustees have agreed that the money donated in memory of Susan will be held by the Diocese in a restricted fund named the **Susan Baker Family Fund**. Susan was very committed to our MU work helping families in both this country and worldwide. Over £2000 has already been given and as Philip said *'The family are convinced that this is exactly what Susan herself would have wanted to happen (although I am also sure that she would have been amazed at the generosity by so many contributors which has brought it about!)*'. From this year when branches wish to allocate donations to specific projects it will be on the list alongside AFIA, Worldwide and Diocesan Fund.

**Sawston Branch** held its first meeting of 2012 by zoom on Thursday 14 January. Thirteen people joined the call and we had a nice service led by the Rev Petra Shakeshaft, and prayers by Rosey Fuell. Our AGM will be on Thursday 18 February and we are putting together a programme of monthly meetings by Zoom until the restrictions ease

**Burwell Branch** also met using Zoom, on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January. Simon Rogers gave an interesting talk on 'My Christian Journey'. Meetings will continue by Zoom on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at 3pm until we can meet together in person.

## Faith In Action – February 2021

Hazel's Reflection for January's Thursday Prayer recalled all we had done during 2020 to support the vulnerable in our local community, and afar, and to live out our MU 5<sup>th</sup> Aim.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU for all the Christmas Giving to the Refuges and Hostels we support. I have received many grateful thanks, in person and by email, from Support Workers.

*"I just want to let you know that the Asda vouchers had arrived safely and will be of great use to the families in refuge".*

*"I would like to say a massive thank you on behalf of all the women it will support. Aldi vouchers are so perfect as they stretch the budget a little further and are the closest store for the women to get to".*

*"It is very kind of the Mothers' Union Branches to keep raising money to support the refuge and these vouchers will be most welcome".*

Before Christmas we were able to pass on warm clothing and blankets to help the homeless in Wisbech, many household goods were given to hostels/refuges and Maureen took a fully laden car of knitting to Christian Hope International. We also delivered knitted items to Hinchinbrooke, the Baby hats were greeted with "You are the best – Thank You", and for the soft twiddle muffs the Frailty Nurse wrote "They are beautiful and ideal for our patients".

We have now been asked if we could make some lap blankets for the Elderly Frail, these can be knitted or crocheted.

It is always a thrill to receive a bag of beautifully knitted goods, so many items made with love and care.

We have a new outlet for baby goods – Fenland Family and Baby Bank is based at March, and caters for children up to 5 years old. Maureen has contact details. Ely baby Bank is now well established and is proving a much needed resource.

In these unusual times there have been ingenious ways used to raise money without meeting together. Many branches are well supported by their church communities; advertising our projects raises awareness of the work we do, and helps us have more to pass on. Unfortunately there continues to be a great need for foodbanks; and the refuges are busier than ever. With Lent approaching perhaps your branch would like a Lent Project – collecting toiletries, cleaning items, tinned and packet goods, or something similar. Whatever you do, it will be most welcome.

Jean Webb Faith in Action Coordinator



Gifts of cleaning materials from **Haddenham Branch** to Hostels and Refuges. Particularly useful for those moving on to their own accommodation

**Please join us for MU Thursday Prayer on Zoom. Topic: Lent**

Time: Feb 18, 2021

Open at 10:00am for 10.30am start

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89646644088>

Meeting ID: 896 4664 4088

By Telephone ring 0203 051 2874 then follow the instructions given.





### Mothers' Union in Myanmar (formerly Burma)

Mothers' Union is a truly international movement. We are represented in 84 countries spread all around the world, practicing our faith and doing God's work. Mothers' Union in the Asian country of Myanmar celebrated its centenary in 2014 and continues to grow and flourish with over 8,600 members today. A visitor to the Diocese of Toungoo writes about her experiences with the remarkable women who make up our fellow members overseas.

[Read the full article here.](#)

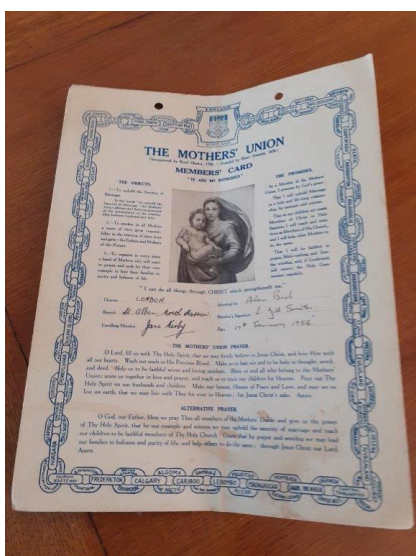
### News from St Mary's, St Neots branch

February 2021



In February we will be saying farewell to one of our branch stalwarts who will be greatly missed in our community, **Sylvia Watson**. Sylvia was the driving force behind the reforming of the branch in 2001 when the branch reopened with just nine members. Under Sylvia's leadership it grew to 34 members in just four years! She was an inspiring and committed branch leader. Sylvia also held office in Ely diocese MU, as Action and Outreach coordinator from 2004 to 2007. We wish her every blessing as she moves to a retirement village south of Bedford, where she

intends to become a diocesan member in St Albans diocese. As she says, "As a MU member in St Albans diocese for over 20 years, it will feel like going home" The photo above shows Sylvia, far right, with Jill sitting next to her, when Winnie Muvunyi, wife of the then Bishop of Kigali and DP of MU in Kigali, paid us a visit. Joan Turner is also in the group, far left.



On a happier note, congratulations to **Jill Henthorne** who this month will have been a MU member for 65 years, a remarkable achievement. Jill joined MU before she was married, which must have been a rare thing in those days! That explains why the name on her membership card is not Henthorne! (see photo) Jill is one of our most devoted members, seldom misses a meeting and is always ready to offer her help for MU events.

We have sadly lost two of our oldest members, **Maureen Burrows**, died on the 19<sup>th</sup> October just short of her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday and **Dorothy Langham** died on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021, aged 96.

Another funeral attended by a good number of MU members in the parish church just before Christmas was for the husband of one of our indoor members, **Joan Turner**. Jim and Joan were a devoted couple and had been married for more than sixty years.

## Thank You God.

"We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you". Psalm 33 v 20 - 22.

It was encouraging as we began our third lockdown when reading the Church Calendar to find inspiration to blow away the post-Christmas blues. Epiphany, Prayer for Christian Unity, Candlemas and Lent are just some of the themes to ponder and celebrate during these cold, dark months. Rebuilding hope and confidence is our MU theme for this year- a positive thought to be thankful for, both as individuals and together in our organisation.

It is trepidation that we have watched the daily headlines and graphs highlighting the social failings that have continued with us into the 21st century. The dark areas of poverty, the loss of work and homes, the lack of food, the increase in domestic violence and sexual abuse, more reliance on addiction to drugs, betting and alcohol and mental health issues us. All these areas crying out for our support and prayers.

Sally Welsh, Vicar and Author writes -

"If you have food in your fridge, clothes on your body, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you're richer than 75% of the entire world"

Thank you God for the MU - that constantly has these causes close to its heart.

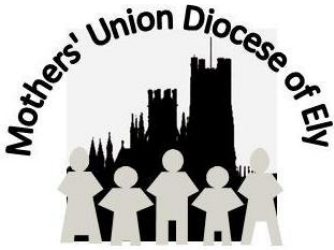
Thank you Loving Lord that when gloom and despair threaten to overwhelm we can turn to you. We can share our thoughts, fears and feelings and have confidence that He is walking beside us. Even when the darkness may threaten our faith and our hope and confidence are tested. We have been given the opportunity to rebuild and renew our altered lives.

We are being given this opportunity to pray and talk to God in our need. Most of us have extra time to spend with our heavenly Father to consider our prayers and actions. Let us open our lives to reflect the light of Christ's love as we travel together in hope and confidence. Giving thanks for God's gifts to us, the amazing grace of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit that we may increase in prayer, commitment and action as Mothers' Union members. For "We can do no great things - only small things with great love". - Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Helen Banyard Praying our Faith Co-Ordinator

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**DAILY HOPE.** A reminder that there is a free Church of England phone line which includes the MU midday prayers plus a variety of hymns and prayers. This service is open 24 hours a day. The number is 0800 804 8044.



**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

# NEWSLETTER

## MARCH 2021



### Preparing for Easter

*Helen Banyard*

We are in the church's season of Lent during which we are encouraged to give more of our time and ourselves to prayer, fasting and study. A time to review our faith journey as we travel towards the gift of Easter.

Traditionally we were encouraged, and the emphasis was placed, on fasting and penitence. As a child I well remember the sound of my pocket money falling through the slot in my Lent collecting box for Overseas Mission, every week during Lent. Today we are given a far wider choice as our way of life has changed and giving up something with meaning now may include a time without social media as an alternative to biscuits or chocolate. We have also been offered this season as an opportunity to increase our giving in time or money to those who are in need, and this year, that may include an extra phone call to someone living alone. Group Bible study and prayer are often well supported during Lent and lockdown may not make this possible for many but this time may be used as a special time of private prayer to strengthen our relationship with God. There is no one way suits all - what is difficult for one of us may be very easy for another - so we each need to look around and find the Lent discipline which best tests/suits us. In a year of changes do look at the MU Family Lent Calendar for 2021 which provides a wide variety of ideas.

Spending so much time in the house I have turned to a book which helps to find God in everyday items and which may transform our approach to each new day. *At Home in Lent* (an exploration of Lent through 46 objects) by Gordon Giles, published by BRF, was inspired by Neil MacGregor's 2010 BBC Radio 4 Series *The History of the World in 100 objects*. It reinforces that the way we live is spiritual as well as practical and we are invited to discover through daily readings that God is already in our homes. Whether you are a minimalist or a collector of 'stuff' are you ready to open your heart and mind as well as your door to let God in?



For many of us our home is not complete without a garden, patio pot or window box. The fruits from outside enter our homes in vases, the pantry or the fridge/freezer. As the weather continues to improve and we are able to spend more time outside we are able to thank God for the signs of new life around us - a foretaste of the new life and joy in the promise of Christ's resurrection.

*Dear Lord, Let us take the opportunity of Lent to enjoy the fulfilling labour of working alongside the master gardener to clear our lives ready for fruitfulness. Let us surrender to God the barren ground of good intentions and unfulfilled aims. Let us be ready for Him to prune us so that more fruit can be produced. May we revel in His closeness as He tends our hearts and plants the seeds of new growth in our lives. Amen*  
(Praying in every Season - MU prayer book)

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## **Faith In Action - March 2021**

With the good news of the hopeful Lockdown easing, Di Sabel, our AFIA Officer will be aiming to book holiday breaks for some stressed families very soon, some who have been waiting for almost a year. We hope this will give them something positive to look forward to.

In March, the Fenland Family Bank has secured premises, and will be welcoming customers when they can. We have contributed items towards their setting up. If anyone has any surplus baby/toddler equipment, (they support up to school age) please ring 0798 572 7025 if you have anything to donate. If you are a knitter, and have baby/children's knitting ready, or would like to knit some, Audrey Kirk is collecting, and can tell you what is most needed. (0135 740782 or [audreykirk@gmail.com](mailto:audreykirk@gmail.com))

Ely Baby Bank are still in need of knitted cardigans/jackets for 9 -12 month babies.

Unfortunately, our outlet for warm clothing for the homeless has closed in Wisbech. If anyone knows of any groups/organisations/outlets supporting the homeless, that would welcome items, please let me know.

The requested lap blankets for the Frailty Unit at Hinchinbrooke are beginning to arrive. Thank you to the skilled knitters, and those who crochet and weave.

*Jean Webb*



## **REPORT ON THE WOMEN'S REFUGE FEBRUARY 2021**

This past year has been a particularly difficult and busy one at the Mid-Cambridgeshire Women's Refuge, due mainly to the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the lockdowns. Putting measures in place to keep everyone at the Refuge safe from the virus has been a real challenge. There has been an increase in the demand for places as domestic violence has increased across the country, but the Refuge can only accommodate eight women and their children at any given time. As soon as one moves on to their own accommodation their place has been immediately filled. As Tina said a few days ago, "There has been so much coming and going we don't know whether we're coming or going most of the time!" ("We" being Tina herself and her assistant, Carolyn).

During lockdown they had to make the decision not to accept any donations of goods so would-be donors have had to keep the goods on hold or dispose of them to other charities. Between the lockdowns however Tina was able to take several loads of donated goods, and these had to be stored for three days in an outside storeroom before they could be used. In the weeks leading up to Christmas gifts, especially vouchers for Tesco and other supermarkets, toys, chocolates, sweets and cleaning materials came pouring in and as always were gratefully accepted. This year I was able to pass on a larger total value of vouchers than in any previous year, £510! These were all donated by MU branches or churches in Ely Diocese. Our own MU branch members contributed £150 worth. The staff at the Refuge do not distribute all the vouchers to the women residing there over the Christmas period, but throughout the year as new residents arrive in need of financial support until they begin to receive their benefits.

Each new arrival receives a welcome package and another when they leave, and this always includes some cleaning materials as well as toiletries and towels. Donations of these items are therefore always needed in addition to dry and packaged groceries, nappies and sanitary items, children's clothing (good as new) and bedding, which can only be accepted if brand new during the present time. Household goods especially kitchenware is also greatly needed for the women when they leave and move into their own accommodation. Last year someone offered a vacuum cleaner and another a microwave, and these were gratefully accepted. Tina is always willing to collect such items when available.

*Liz Elson*

*MU Rep for the Mid Cambridgeshire Refuge*

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### **My Dad!**

Frank Henry Burton was born in Ironbridge, Shropshire in December 1925. He grew up in North Devon and Somerset, the family finally settling in Burnham on Sea (where I was born!) and Frank went to school there, later winning a scholarship to go to the boy's Grammar School in Bridgewater. He left at 14, did several jobs, including working in a gentleman's outfitters and joined the RAF in 1944. After the initial training he was then recruited as a wireless operator. After the war finished, he started working for the MoD in Somerset, where he married Dorothy (my Mum!). Nine and a half years later (when I was two and a half), we moved to South East London, Frank worked at the Woolwich Arsenal, at Berkeley Square in the City and Mottingham with a brief spell in BAOR in Rheindahlen, Germany. His last working days were at RAE Farnborough, where he was a senior accountant.

Frank retired in 1985 and they returned to live in Burnham on Sea, Somerset. He was very busy doing voluntary work with the WRVS and Highbridge Festival of the Arts. He and Dorothy returned to St Andrew's

Church where they were "regulars" and Dorothy continued to be a loyal member of Mothers' Union. When Dorothy died in 2015, Frank moved up to Wisbech St Mary to live with us in the Vicarage and we all moved into Wisbech town in 2016. Frank was enrolled as a Mothers' Union member in his 90's, continuing the support that he had always given to Dorothy's membership and my own.



Frank touched the lives of so many during his 95 years, he was a shining example of the Mothers' Union ethos of upholding family life and marriage, his own lasting well over 60 years.

*Sarah Bradbury MU Trustee and ADVP.*

## DIOCESAN LADY DAY SERVICE 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH

In a normal year there would be MU services across the diocese to celebrate Lady Day. In most places that is not going to happen this year so there will be a Diocesan Lady Day service on Zoom led by Revd. Michael Banyard, starting at 10.30am. To join the meeting click on the link or enter the ID below



**Topic: Hazel Williams. Lady Day Service**

**Time: Mar 25, 2021 10:15 AM London**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86515124991>**

**Meeting ID: 865 1512 4991**

**Granta Deanery are also holding a Zoom Service with communion at 9.30am led by Revd. Petra Shakshaft. If you wish to join it please e-mail [Janetm.martin@ntlworld.com](mailto:Janetm.martin@ntlworld.com) for the link.**

.....  
In February there was an article about the **Photo Competition and our new YouTube Channel**, which has links to the video. If it was not possible for you to click on the Newsletter link last time, to take you to the website, this is the link separately, which will hopefully make it easier to access. Press Ctrl and click on the link.

**Photo Competition** video link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMuzeJuxz\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMuzeJuxz_c)

**Debbie has done a wonderful job with all the photographs. Well worth watching.**  
.....

I have the sad news that Barbara Goodden of Oakington died in a nursing home on 6th February of Covid aged 83. A former member of Grantchester branch, she had also supported the Action and Outreach team.

.....  
If you do not already **Gift Aid** your subscription (or your other donations) and you are a tax payer please consider it. Your subscription is worth £5 more to the diocese if you do so. A gift aid form is going out with this newsletter and also to you if you receive it by e-mail, or if it is delivered it will be in hard copy.

\*\*\*\*\*

**World Day of Prayer Services** on March 5<sup>th</sup> will not be happening in person, in most places across the world because of Covid. On that day the World day of Prayer International Committee will release a video on their u-tube channel, led by the women of Vanuatu, so that wherever we are we can join the service.

### ZOOM MEETINGS

18<sup>th</sup> March Thursday Prayer. Open at 10.15am for 10.30am start. ID 852 3557 4315 (no password)

25<sup>th</sup> March Lady Day 10.30am. ID 865 1512 4991.

By Telephone ring 0203 051 2874 then follow the instructions given.

### CONTACT DETAILS

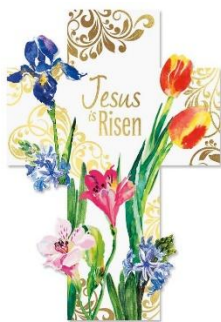
Charity no. 251394

Ros home 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel home 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

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





**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

# 2021 April Newsletter



Risen Lord,  
fill us with new life  
through your resurrection power  
that we may share your love  
with those who live in darkness;  
that we may share your peace  
with those who live in fear;  
that we may share your joy  
With those who live in sorrow.  
Risen Lord, live in us  
that we may shine  
with the light of Christ.

## ELECTIONS for 2022 - 25

**Hazel Williams**

2021 is the last year of this Triennial and it does not seem over two years since I became **Ely MU Diocesan President**. Much has happened - most of it totally unexpected. I have used my telephone and the post more than ever, not to mention e-mails and Zoom (which I had never heard of last March)! Last month I was nominated for another three years as president by the trustees and am delighted to have been elected. I have carried out only one 'engagement' in person over the last year and only a few using Zoom in the Diocese, but have tried to keep you all up-to-date with what has been happening via the newsletter. This, like Topsy, has grown because although there were no events to let you know about in advance, task-group leaders and many members have contributed articles. I hope you have enjoyed having something to read and help you retain contact with the 'outside world'.

**Thursday prayer** was another event that had to change, as the Cathedral and churches were closed. It has been a delight to hear how many enjoy having the short Thursday Prayer service sent or delivered to them each month as well as those who are enjoying it on Zoom, who could not have made the journey to attend in person, even when it was possible to do so.

The next stage of elections is about to start with **nominations for trustees** for the next three years. Some are intending to stand for another three years but others have come to the end of their six years so are unable to stand again, and others are moving on. Nomination papers will be sent to all branch leaders. If you are interested in taking a more active role in the diocese, beyond your branch, please ask your branch leader for the papers. At the end of the newsletter there is information outlining the roles of trustees, as well as the areas that each task group covers. Many who are interested come in through this route initially if there is a role in a task group that they would enjoy and like to help with. Nominations need to be in to Ros Wright, MU diocesan secretary by Monday April 12<sup>th</sup>.

## Faith In Action – Jean Webb Task Group Coordinator

It is always good to receive messages of thanks and I have 3 recent ones I would like to share with you, for it is your enthusiasm, generosity and skill that has made them possible.

The first is from Cambridge Women's Aid, I know several branches sent gift vouchers at Christmas. The other 2 Refuges we support would say something similar, and are always most grateful for anything we provide (although often restricted for storage space).

*"Thank you so much for sending us the vouchers. All the vouchers you send are passed on to women who either have no or low income and are therefore unable to buy enough food or necessary items for themselves and their families. A voucher is very well received as it does not carry the stigma that some women feel is attached to food banks. It means that the woman can buy what she needs and what she wants - rather than what might be available at a food bank.*

*Sometimes the women will use supermarket vouchers to purchase school uniform items for their children. All school aged children who come into refuge will start at a new school and they often need to get a few new items.*

*Part of our role is to support women to access their entitlement to benefits, but there can often be a considerable delay between making the claim and receiving the payment. Many women will come into refuge with virtually no money, and often with debt, through no fault of their own. It goes without saying, that once a woman has a safe roof over her head and has funds to support herself and her children, she can take the first steps to starting a new safer life.*

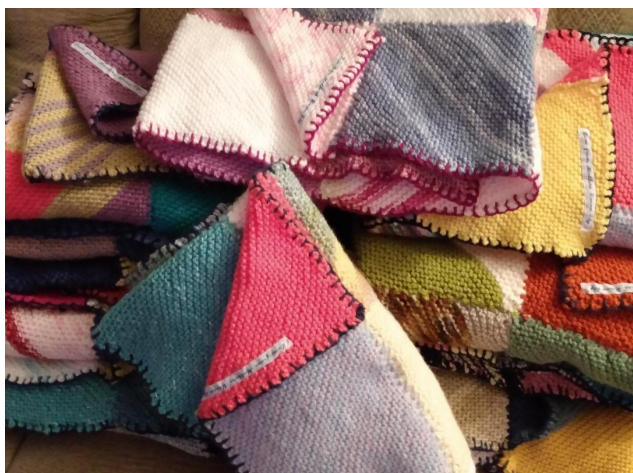
*There is no doubt that the vouchers you have given will make a considerable difference to the women who receive them".*

We had a mention in the March Newsletter of Future Care Solutions, one of the Care companies we have provided with Soft Twiddle Muffs. Alongside a picture of a Twiddle Muff they wrote –

*"This is a thick hand muff with bits and bobs (twiddles) attached inside and out. It is designed to provide a stimulation activity for clients with dementia, who often have restless Behaviour. The muffs provide a wonderful source of visual, tactile and sensory stimulation. They are made for us by members of the Mothers' Union of Ely Diocese. Thank you all very much."*

Recently I have been asking for some lap blankets for Hinchingsbrooke Frailty Unit. Sherly, the Frailty Specialist Nurse wrote-

*Thanks for all the help, and please do mention our thanks to your Knitters for the great job they are doing. Also, if we could have some more Twiddle muffs please, that would be great.*



So, we continue to knit, crochet, collect, fundraise to put our Faith Into Action. Thank you all.

Beautifully made, colourful lap blankets made by members of Balsham branch, with our diocesan labels added. Ready to go to Hinchingsbrooke.



## **Somersham Branch News - Barbara Hoy Branch Leader.**

I am very proud that all Somersham members have paid their subscription this year. I believe that success is because during the Lockdown the members have been sent every month a copy of the MU Diocese Newsletter, plus any other information in which they could be interested. Grateful acknowledgements come back by return email.

Ros has produced and sent a Large Print copy of the Newsletter that are printed out and hand delivered to non-computer members. The large print versions are delivered to our members who struggle to read with bad eyesight.

In these difficult times it is *so important* that our members feel very involved, even with no meetings. Every now and again I will write a friendly note for membership distribution. Of course, when there is a seasonal item such as Advent or Easter I might also write a prayer.

As a branch we have been keeping Maureen Haigh busy over the past year - whenever we were not locked down. Two Somersham members in particular have been working very hard on collecting items for the various charities supported by Mothers' Union. This involves storing, laundering, sorting, knitting, household items and fabrics, baby clothes, large and small baby equipment; in fact all items for Ely Diocese Projects. Maureen has expressed her gratitude for the many donations and has faithfully collected all from our two local members.

Thankfully there is 'light at the end of the tunnel' as they say and we look forward to the Covid restrictions being gradually lifted after Easter. It may be some while before we get back to some normality regarding meetings but when we do, then I know that my committee and I will have some careful planning to do.

Many prayers will be said to underpin our hopes. With Christian love and blessings.

## **Farcet Branch News – Veronica Woodcock-Ellard Branch Leader**

Our church St. Mary's had a Christmas Tree Festival before lockdown and our MU branch entered a tree decorated with knitted crosses with a prayer on the reverse, baubles and battery operated lights. The idea of the crosses came from the autumn edition of Families First.

In January I sent a knitted cross to each one of our members (20 in total). Many said how they had used them in prayer, and how thankful they were to receive them. We have now sent a basket full of knitted crosses to our city hospital in Peterborough. A chaplain said how happy he was to receive them and he would pass them on to patients who needed one to give comfort in prayer.



Throughout this year I have made copies of the MU newsletters and sent them to each member, including a letter from myself and prayers, to help cheer up my members and letting them know they are not forgotten.

In between we have telephoned each other. What would we have done without our telephones this last year?

Also through the year our members have knitted squares for blankets and knee blankets. Sue, our branch secretary sews them together for us. Bless her.

Let us hope we can soon get together and socialise and get back to some normality.

God Bless and best wishes from Farcet Mothers' Union branch.



## Annual Report for 2020

This report, which also goes to the charity commission is being sent as a separate attachment with this newsletter. It gives all the information about our governance and activities over the last year. The accounts for the year will be sent when they are finalised.

### ROLE DESCRIPTIONS FOR TRUSTEES

#### DIOCESAN PRESIDENT

The rôle of the Diocesan President is to lead and represent Mothers' Union in the diocese and beyond. The Diocesan President should have a strong faith and the vision to lead the Mothers' Union into the future, embracing both the global vision and the grass roots membership, and have the enthusiasm and commitment to use the gifts and skills of members. They should be able to plan strategically, work in partnership, use effective contemporary communication skills, and embrace the links with the Diocese and its vision.

#### FOUR ARCHDEACONRY VICE-PRESIDENTS

There will be two Vice-Presidents for each archdeaconry. Together with the Diocesan President they will further the work of Mothers' Union in the Diocese, initiate events and support local leadership as well as getting to know the members in their archdeaconry. As a Trustee they will fulfil the rôle as required by the constitution and work as a team with the other Trustees.

#### FOUR TASK GROUP LEADERS

##### **1. Praying our Faith 2. Faith in Action 3. Finance & Administration 4. Fundraising & Communication**

The task leaders will work with the President and Trustees to further the work of Mothers' Union in the diocese, leading and supporting the work of their group, ensuring that members in the diocese are kept informed of their work. As a Trustee they will fulfil the rôle as required by the constitution, organise and chair meetings of their group and prepare an annual group budget.

#### Non-Trustee Task Group Activity Leaders

##### 1. Praying our Faith Task Group Members

- Worldwide • Prayer • Emergency Prayer • Chaplain • Clergy liaison • Campaigning

##### 2. Faith in Action Task Group Members

- Away from it all holidays • Prison support • Local initiatives • Supporting parents • Wisbech project

##### 3. Finance & Administration Task Group Members

- Treasurer • Gift Aid administrator • Finance Administrator • Safeguarding co-ordinator • MU Diocesan Secretary

##### 4. Fundraising & Communication Task Group Members

- MU Enterprises • Grapevine • Cathedral Display • Diocesan Members • Website, social media

**CONTACT DETAILS** Charity no. 251394  
Ros home 01223 861846  
[roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com) Hazel home 01638  
743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

**MU Thursday Prayer on Zoom (start at 11am)**

**Time: Apr 15, 2021 10:45 AM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88623348036>

**ID 886 2334 8036 (no password)**



# May Newsletter 2021

I am delighted that all the posts for election as trustees for the triennial beginning January 2022 have been filled. Thank you to those who are standing for a second three years, those who have agreed to fulfil a different post and those who are new to a role. Kristy Leach, who has been our Safeguarding Co-ordinator is happy to stand as a Trustee again but we do have two other trustee posts that are available for co-option. Diederik Vergunst has done an excellent job as treasurer for a number of years, but is moving away from the area. We are delighted that Derek Tye, who has a background in finance, has agreed to be our treasurer. Details have already been sent to treasurers. The April newsletter outlined the areas that each task group covers. If you would like to play a more active part in how the MU Ely Diocese is run or have a particular interest or skill that you feel you could contribute please get in touch.

## Diocese of Ely Mothers' Union

### Elections 2021 for Triennial 2022-2024

**President** Name... Hazel Williams MBE

#### Cambridge Archdeaconry Vice Presidents Nominations

**Vice President 1** Name... Jo Wibberley

**Vice President 2** Name ... Gill Uttin

#### Huntingdon & Wisbech Archdeaconry Vice Presidents

**Vice President 1** Name Helen Banyard

**Vice President 2** Name Maureen Haigh

#### Task Group Leaders Nominations:

- 1. Praying our Faith** Name ... Christine Holt
- 2. Finance & Administration** Name... Catherina Griffiths
- 3. Fundraising & Communication** Name... Debbie Tye
- 4. Faith in Action** Name ... Jean Webb

#### Treasurer

Name....Derek Tye (derekftye@hotmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

**CONTACT DETAILS** Charity no. 251394  
Ros home 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)  
Hazel home 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

**MU Thursday Prayer on Zoom (start at 11am)**  
**Time: May 20th, 2021 10:45 AM**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87585537241>  
**ID 875 8553 7241 (no password)**

My secondary school was a Grammar School in Isleworth, west London (or as it was then, West of London). Passing the 11-plus was a big surprise to me, not least since I did not realise I had sat it – it had just been passed off as another “Assessment”. However, I turned up to what had all the appearances of a stately home, it having been the country residence of Sir Joseph Banks, the great botanist (among other worthy things). The headmaster must have come with the house – a real Gentleman of the old school. Of course all the masters and mistresses wore full academic robes (except the sports master) and the whole deal was like living in the past. But it was beautiful with incredible grounds, including a fountain (sadly not working). Anyway, back to the head; he sought to drum into us some religious teaching and would refer to God as “The Three P’s” which he would go on to define as Perfect Wisdom, Perfect Love, Perfect Knowledge. How’s that for succinct?

As is the way of much of what one hears, the full understanding of that phrase took time to sink in and it was not until long after I left school that the meaning of it made sense to me. As I write this, I am in day 182 of my (365 day) bible reading plan, so I am almost exactly half way through reading the whole bible. I must say it has been very easy, but then it is a great story! But reading whole books, not just the extracts we receive during the services and so on, sets a scene within which the meaning of our church readings make better sense and the whole story comes alive.

Sometimes simple things carry huge meaning which passes us by because we do not recognise the setting within which it sits. The Mothers’ Union Prayer Diary for 2021 had “Simplicity” as the theme for week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> April and on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> (which would have been Susan’s birthday) we were reminded that, in Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus gives us this simple but profound message: “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will wear. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.” This is more true when you consider that other oft-quoted phrase: “You do not know what tomorrow will bring” – i.e. we cannot see into the future. Of course, to some extent we have to have a plan, but how good it would be if we could stop overthinking everything we do, worrying about all the things which might go wrong and how we can overcome them if they do. Think about how much less worrying we would do and how much more time we would have to do important things, like getting to know Jesus better.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Communication news - New YouTube Videos.                      Debbie Tye - Co-ordinator**

We have two more new YouTube video links to share with you for April Thursday Prayer and March MU April Branch Meeting.

The theme for April Thursday Prayer was The Joy of Easter, led by our Chaplain, Revd Mike Banyard.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMTBgkC1qNQ>

At the April Branch Meeting of March MU, Hazel Williams spoke about the Clewer Initiative and partnership with Mothers’ Union, working together to end modern day slavery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrEhX--vORk>

We hope you enjoy watching these videos.



Throughout the past year, the work of the Faith In Action Task Group has continued whenever possible. Sadly, the most beneficial work within Little Hey prison has not happened, but I am sure the inmates have been remembered in prayer.

We were able to provide 5 AFIA breaks for needy families at the October half-term, and Di Sabel, our bookings officer is currently arranging some for May half-term. Unfortunately these are restricted in number, and the cost has risen accordingly.

Maureen Haigh, Local Projects Officer has been kept busy throughout, and hostels and refuges supported whenever possible. Knitting continues to be received and thank you all knitters, and those sewing up blankets.

The collections made by branches of toiletries, or cleaning materials have been invaluable, as were all the gift vouchers sent at Christmas. One of the Refuges we support (Mid-Cambs.) has been reviewing how they will be moving forward, out of the crisis, and how we can best support. The refuge suggest **£5 vouchers for Wilco, Home bargains, BM, etc.** which can be used towards new items, giving women the opportunity to choose their own things, and help them regain confidence, self-esteem and contribute towards their mental well-being.

Also, they have asked for support particularly for items less often received (**see below**). If you aren't planning a big branch fundraiser (and I know many branches like to do so in the summer), perhaps consider a collection of items, ask in your church, and use social media if you are familiar with it – here in Ely I have had many people delighted to support our projects in this way. (Mainly young Mums).

Currently Mid-Cambs. have good stocks of second-hand bedding and sanitary products.

I am delighted that the enterprise supporting the homeless in Wisbech, previously known as 50 Backpacks, now named 50/50 Vision, has been absorbed into the work of the Salvation Army. We will be responding with help for warm clothing again when it is requested.

### **Mid Cambs. Refuge Wish List**

biological washing capsules

fabric softener

loo paper

tissues

toothbrush and toothpaste

deodorant

liquid soap

squash

biscuits

bathmats

tea towels

flannels

size 4 or 5 or 6 nappies

foil, baking parchment, cling film

food plastic bags small

new plastic food storage boxes for fridge

cheap mop and bucket

AAA and AA batteries

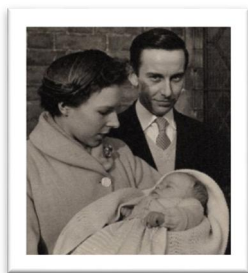
sellotape and scissors

snuggly dressing gowns

new cheap phone for emergency use whilst in refuge

**Local Contact Liz Elson 01480 211726**

**[jjimelson@talktalk.net](mailto:jjimelson@talktalk.net)**



### Sixty-two years of Mothers' Union membership

Three weeks after my son John was born, I walked into St Andrew's Church, Bexhill and spoke with Marion Swift, the MU Enrolling Member, in front of the branch, saying that I wanted to join the Mothers' Union. Marion was shocked by my question and said I should join the Young Wives Club, but I said no, I had

a baby and wanted to join the MU! During the second week of November 1957, I joined the Mothers' Union and was given a preparation card. I took my son with me to the meetings

and communion services, which were held once a month. I was admitted on 10 July 1958 and spent a year being guided by an elderly branch member, who kept in touch after I moved from Bexhill to Ilford, until John was 15 and was confirmed. I joined the St Albans branch in 1959.

St Albans was a younger branch and was much more hands on. Grace Merry was the Enrolling Member and worked at Mary Sumner House. We were a very forward-looking branch and closely involved with the Korean MU and funded a missionary worker. During the Mothers' Union centenary celebrations in 1976, I had a ticket to the service at Westminster Abbey and the reception at Lambeth Palace, where I met the Korean representatives, and was able to send our greetings back with them. By now I had two daughters, Penny and Wendy, and all the children came to church every Sunday, six years down to a babe in the pram. They were quite a handful, but the supportive MU were there helping me through everything, with

encouragement and family life. My Wendy, the youngest, had Alice Hart, a MU friend, as godmother.

In 1967 we moved to Rampton from Ilford and lived in the servants' quarters of the Vicarage, which was great fun and we fostered several children. I joined the local MU branch, who called us as 'the Londoners', but soon we settled to country life and I worked on the land with them. I became Treasurer to the branch and Enrolling Member. Diana Goodhart used to drive through Cottenham and take me to Thursday Prayer at Ely Cathedral every month. I also became the Deanery Prayer Representative, encouraging prayer and planning the twice-yearly Quiet Evening and Days.

The MU Quiet Day, which took place at Neil House, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, was a challenge for me when I felt God had called me to respond to His call. This was not an easy calling in the early 1970s for a woman. I took up the challenge and answered the call, supported by dear Mary Sibson, who encouraged me with her support and prayers. During this time, I trained as a Reader and was licensed as Ely's first women Reader on 30 April 1977, my birthday.

In 1978 I was asked to work with Rev Richard Smart in Dry Drayton, Bar Hill and Madingley, a group of parishes north of Cambridge. I joined the Madingley MU Branch. The Branch had members from all three parishes, whose members were quite a cross section in differing church outlooks: Bar Hill – Ecumenical; Dry Drayton – middle-of-the-road Anglican; and Madingley – Prayer Book-oriented. We were led wonderfully by Elizabeth Seale, who was a thoughtful, caring leader for us all. Elizabeth kept in touch with me about MU when I moved to Cambridge to work in the Parish of the Ascension, which had no MU Branch. I trained as a speaker with Norma Emmerton and on 29 September 1980 I became a speaker, and have been asked to speak in many branches about women's



ministry. Some members who listened become Readers and some have gone further, which is inspiring for the MU in widening our outreach in differing ways.

After moving to Cambridge I became a Deacon in 1988 at the Parish of the Ascension in Cambridge, and then moved to Cherry Hinton, a large demanding parish. It was an honour to be ordained with the first women in 1994. I kept in touch with the MU through the Diocese and Quiet Days. Cherry Hinton did not have a branch and so I stayed in contact with Elizabeth, who continued to send me the Home and Family magazine.



Bishop John Flack asked me in the year 2000 to become a Canon of Ely Cathedral; I retired in 2004

after nine years at St George's, Chesterton and moved to Sawston. There I met an MU friend, Joan King, who had been the Representative for Young Wives in the past. She invited me to come to St Andrew's, Stapleford, where I was able to join the MU branch and attend their meetings and Quiet Evenings led by Suzanne Watt. The branch asked me from time to time to give talks. There were branch outings to Milton for Sausage Sizzles and meetings and lunches at Mary's and Phillipa's in their lovely garden. I even managed to go to Winchester and Edinburgh with Kay Coe for the Central Council meeting. The picture is of Hilary Street and I running a few yards with Alice Leadbeter, Susan Baker's daughter, welcoming her whilst she was running around all the branches in Ely Diocese to raise money for MU in 2017, before she ran the London Marathon.

Mary Sumner left us quite a legacy to carry on. I look back on the MU members I have met over 62 years, who have been part of my spiritual journey. They are such dedicated group of people who are in the service of their Lord and family life in so many ways. Thank

you, Mothers' Union, for the great work you do, giving so much good.

The scope and fellowship of the Mothers' Union help widen our horizons and is definitely worth joining.

With thankfulness for so many years in the Mothers' Union,

Rev Canon Pam Reed



Ely MU Garden Party 2015



## DATES TO REMEMBER

**BISHOP'S GARDEN**

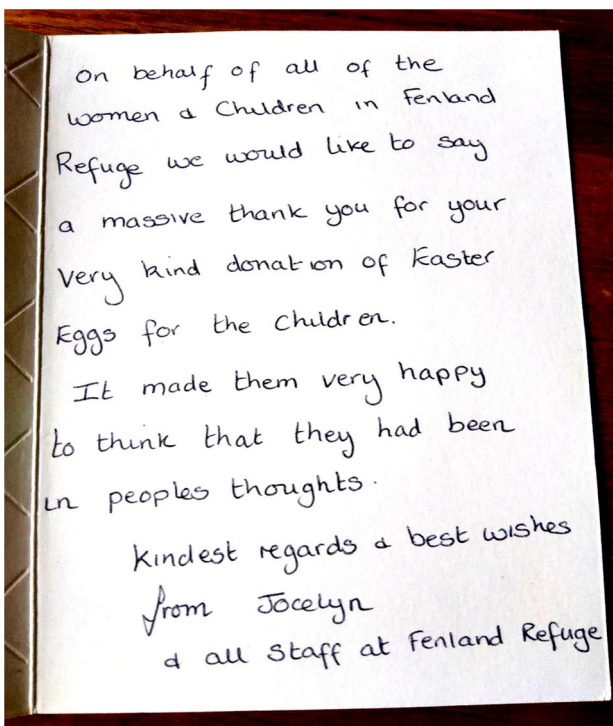
**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July**

**3 – 5pm**

**The MU will be hosting an event, using a large marquee, in the Bishop of Ely's Garden in July.**

**Look out in future newsletters for more details**





## EASTER EGGS FOR THE FENLAND REFUGE

Anne Hassall from Steeple Morden organised a collection of Easter eggs from both members and others in the congregation for the Fenland Refuge. 54 were delivered and some lovely thank you cards were received.



Congratulations to Barbara and Mike Clegg on celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary in mid-May.

Made even more special because Mike was hospitalised with Covid





# June Newsletter 2021

## Annual Review 2020

With this edition of the June newsletter you will also receive our Annual Review 2020, which is the report that is sent to the Charity Commission. This gives an overview of the activities of the Ely Diocesan Charity throughout 2020. Less activity this year from branches because of Covid but many individuals have risen to the challenge of supporting those who need it.



This screen shot of a Zoom meeting, taken at the MU Global Service during 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, seemed an appropriate front page as it was a new skill that many of have learned in the last year.

It has been a challenging year for many in Great Britain, but Gill Uttin’s talk for Thursday Prayers in May, gave us more information about the situation in our link dioceses in Zambia, Rwanda, Nigeria and India. They are having a very difficult time indeed but their MU branches have continued to help others in so many ways. Acting to prevent girls being sold off for early marriage, helping teenage girls (where the pandemic has caused a rise in pregnancies to 30-40 in one parish) as well as preparing meals for those in hospital, are all things that they are dealing with constantly. However the rains have been good in some areas so crops have grown and services are still happening, with social distancing, but are restricted to 1hour 30 minutes!

\*\*\*\*\*

**CONTACT DETAILS** Charity no. 251394  
Ros home 01223 861846  
[roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)  
Hazel home 01638 743897  
[hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)  
  
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

**MU Thursday Prayer on Zoom**  
(start at 11am)  
  
Time: June 17th, 2021 10:45 am  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84953652866>  
  
Meeting ID: 849 5365 2866  
  
Presented by Maureen Haigh



**MU REFLECTION FOR MAY-JUNE**

*Philip Baker (15<sup>th</sup> May 2021)*

The prayer for Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May in the MU Prayer Diary:

*Lord, you are Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, so we ask you to help us live with eternity in view, trusting that you will inspire us to do what we need to accomplish and that you will be with us as we step out into the unknown.*

We read things on a daily basis and, mostly, they slip past our consciousness with hardly a notice. But sometimes we read something and there is that spark in it that attracts our attention and will insist that we pay it our full attention. This prayer was one such for me. Indulge me, and read it through again, taking time to let the words sink in. Now perhaps it is just me but I think it just oozes meaning, every word individually and the whole collectively. If we are serious about our faith surely “living with eternity in view” is a given. But how often do we actually think about it? Praying to be “inspired to do what we need to accomplish” – now there is the whole crux of the matter – what are we to accomplish? Start from an understanding of that and all else falls into place (and, no, I do not yet know what I am intended to accomplish; how many of us really do? I think Susan did, but I think she was an exception). And every day we take steps into the unknown; mostly they are small steps but sometimes they are monumental steps which we never saw coming and needing to be faced; but with our Lord’s help, which is always there if we ask for it, all things are doable and no step is too great. Hard possibly, challenging sometimes, daunting always, but with God’s guidance, doable. And then the opening phrase “Lord, you are Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”. Can there be a more succinct way of expressing our Lord God’s infinity of every dimension – time and space being just those that our limited intellect can even begin to grasp.

So often, in our modern, busy lives, we are in too much of a hurry to pay adequate attention to what we are reading and so only gain a superficial understanding of its meaning. When what we are reading could be instrumental in determining our eternal future surely it must be worth putting everything else on hold for a while, just so that we concentrate fully on what we are doing, thereby gaining so much more out of the experience?

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**Faith In Action News– June ’21**

**Jean Webb- Coordinator.**

We have a change of Contact/Link person for the **Fenland Refuge**. Following a recent illness, Pat Case feels unable to continue. Pat has been our Link for many years, and we are enormously grateful for all she has done for our diocese supporting the Refuge. Thank you Pat, we wish you well.

Many of you will know **Sue Claydon**. Sue has been involved with Fenland Refuge since it was opened, and has agreed to be our link person. Contact Sue if you have items you think might be useful for the Refuge when rehoming clients, or to support them while in the hostel. Unfortunately, the Refuge are not able to accept everything they are offered as they have limited storage space.

Sue can be contacted on 01354 654214 [sueclaydon112@gmail.com](mailto:sueclaydon112@gmail.com)

A reminder that the **Mid Cambs Refuge** Contact/Link person is **Liz Elson** who will be happy to receive the items that were on the list published last month. 01480 211726 [jimelson@talktalk.net](mailto:jimelson@talktalk.net)

## Responding to God today

Helen Banyard - Co-Ordinator  
Praying Our Faith Task Group

*"Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all ours, with ten thousand beside."*

These words from the well-known hymn are in my thoughts as I write. We are between two phases of opening up after the recent Lockdown and the sun is shining! So we are stretching our wings (like the Peregrine Falcon chicks, nesting on the roof of Ely Cathedral) and enjoying a break from the below average temperatures and the threatening dark skies of the past month, which at times were like a visual reminder of the latest strain of the Covid virus. Despite that invisible enemy to our way of life we would now appear to be in a welcomed season of recovery.

Our response to our present situation, as part of Christ's Church is a challenge. We pray for those who are sick or dying, those suffering from Covid and Long Covid, all those who have lost their work or had their education disrupted. Those in our communities who have been bereaved, the lonely, angry, bewildered, the homeless, those forced to stay at home unable to meet with family and friends, those in abusive and violent relationships or suffering from mental illness. Members of the NHS and other support services who have worker and voluntary organisations hard to provide for all of us during the pandemic.

Comfort, O comfort my people says your God.

How do each of us respond? Comfort means to give someone their strength back. This can take many forms from physical nursing, a food bank donation, running an errand to listening on the end of a phone. Comfort will mean a variety of things to each MU member.

Recently I re-read that our mission as members is to promote loving, respectful and flourishing relationships. Through promoting the importance of marriage, supporting families and nurturing faith. Members are encouraged to sensitively spread the news of a God who loves and cares for us all, regardless of all faiths and none. It gives us all food for thought as we are all at different stages of our lives and certainly one size does not fit all as we seek to find different ways to reach out to others. We are being challenged to open our eyes to the Kingdom of God in our everyday lives and see God in our daily existence. God bless us all as we search to rebuild our lives, communities and offer all that we are in service to Him. Amen

**A Quiet Day:** - a time for prayer and reflection is being planned for later this year - circumstances permitting!  
Watch this space for more details.

**Join other Mothers' Union members for our first Diocesan  
event of the year in the Bishop of Ely's Garden**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July**

**3 -5pm**

**More details in the July newsletter and on our facebook  
page closer to the time**

It is a pleasure to be able to share branch news across the diocese. I am always happy to include articles sent to me.

Hazel

## BALSHAM BRANCH

**Joanna Sanders**

Five of us have been busy knitting or sewing up squares for blankets and around 10 lap blankets were made as requested by Maureen Haigh. We have also sent several parcels of blankets (you can send two blankets for £3.30) to Christian Hope International – a charity based in Romford – where Maureen takes knitted garments given to her over the year. Before Lockdown 3, CHI were able to send **400 boxes** of knitted garments to Eastern Europe through Missions without Borders.

A lovely lady aged 93 with her son came over to Balsham from Upwell bringing me 180 ten inch squares! I felt quite daunted by the amount but I kept 100 to make into 5 blankets and the rest I gave to Maureen – she has members in St Ives who are good at sewing up! Upwell MU has now closed but Margaret is now an Indoor Prayer member – as I am the co-ordinator for the Ely Diocesan MU we made contact with each other. Sadly there are now only 18 IMPC members – when I took over about six years ago there were 50. Each member receives cards at Christmas, Easter and for their birthdays and letters from the Worldwide President, Ely’s President and me.



Margaret Barnard, who is an IMPC member, is 93 years old.

This photograph shows one of the blankets made from some of the 180 squares she knitted.

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## Diocesan Membership

If you live in an area that does not have a Mothers’ Union branch, but would like to support the MU in their worldwide work, please consider joining as a Diocesan Member. Subscription is the same as branch membership but newsletters and other information comes direct to your in-box or is posted to you instead of coming via the branch. If you would like to know more get in touch with Debbie Tye at [dmtypost@hotmail.com](mailto:dmtypost@hotmail.com) or ring Hazel or Ros (details on the front page) and they will pass on your request for information.





**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

**JULY/AUGUST**

**NEWSLETTER 2021**

## **CELEBRATING 145 YEARS OF MOTHERS' UNION**

**Join other MU Members for our first Diocesan  
Event of the year in the Bishop of Ely's Garden.**

**Sunday 25 July from 3-5pm**

**Please bring your own picnic tea – soft drinks will be  
provided.**

**MUe STALL**

**WORLDWIDE LINKS**

**RAFFLE.**

**(cash/cheques accepted)**

We are delighted that this event is going ahead, but it will be necessary to **book your tickets in advance** as we need to manage numbers attending. (Family & friends welcome.)

Bookings either via the link online through Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mothers-union-diocesan-event-tickets-161951295685>

Or by contacting Debbie (muelydiocese@hotmail.com)

Please give your name, address and phone number, and number of people attending.

Bring a folding garden chair and/or a rug if you have one.

**There is no charge for tickets**, donations gratefully received, proceeds to MU projects.

(We will be following Government guidelines and would ask everyone to bring a face covering with them. Any further changes to the guidance, following the planned easing of lockdown rules on 19 July, will be noted.)

I attended my first 'in person' branch meeting in early June, to talk on 'The Modern Day Mothers' Union'. This took place on a beautiful day, at Bassingbourne Church, for the Shingay Deanery. I also had the joy of presenting certificates to four long serving members. Anne Harding (1952), Sheila Dunn (1960), Valerie Haydon (1970) and Carol Ann Wyatt (1980). Some had joined, as young mums, when their mother joined and Anne when she was a missionary in Tristan da Cunha. Unfortunately I was so out of practice, as Zoom has been the norm for such a long time, I forgot to take a photograph.

Hazel

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Our congratulations go to Mothers' Union members who are being ordained during the first week-end in July.

**Jackie Metcalfe** is being priested, to serve in Milton. Jackie used to be a MU Trustee in the Ely Diocese until she started her training.

**Sue Squires-Dutton** is being made Deacon, to serve in Wisbech. She began at the Orchards School as our MU family worker, supported by Susan Baker, who began the initiative.

**Jill Stimpson**, also being made Deacon, to serve in Wilburton, Haddenham, Witchford & Wentworth. In the past she has been a MU branch leader and deanery leader. She was an LLM at Wilburton.

**Jon Sanders** who was the secretary of one of the charities we support, the Whitworth Trust, is also being made a deacon. He will be a curate at Great St. Mary's in Cambridge.

*Our congratulations go to all who are taking another momentous step in their Christian journey.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### Significant birthday and wedding anniversaries

If a member of your branch is celebrating a special birthday (90 or 100) or a special wedding anniversary (50, 60, 70) and they would like a card from the Mothers' Union signed by the worldwide president please get in touch with Mary Sumner House. E-mail [membership@mothersunion.org](mailto:membership@mothersunion.org) with your request with name and address of recipient plus the date needed and which celebration it is. You can also send your request by post.

\*\*\*\*\*

I am sad to inform you of the death of **Hazel Offord** who died on 27th May aged 92. She was an active member of Grantchester branch and helped to organise the monthly meetings when it became a prayer branch in recent years. Her funeral was on Friday 25th June. May she rest in peace.

**MU Thursday Prayer on Zoom (start at 11am)**  
**Time: July 15th, 2021 10:45 am**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82501485499>  
**Meeting ID: 825 0148 5499**  
**Presented by Helen Banyard (Praying our Faith)**

**MU Thursday Prayer on Zoom (start at 11am)**  
**Time: August 19th, 2021 10:45 am**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83759263332>  
**Meeting ID: 837 5926 3332**  
**Presented by Irene Porter - Mary Sumner**

**CONTACT DETAILS** Charity no. 251394 <https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>  
**Ros home** 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)  
**Hazel home** 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

Again I take as inspiration a prayer from the MU Prayer Diary, this month from Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June:

*I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. (Matthew 25: 35, 40)*

This is one of those passages we all know, but have we really thought through what it means, how profound it is and what it implies we should do? Here is our chance to put that right.

I suggest it might be helpful to turn the statement round and consider it from another direction. We know how we should treat God: were we to meet him, shiny robes, halo and all (so there is no doubt as to his identity!). I have no doubt we would kneel before him and offer ourselves in any way he would use us. We would offer him food, drink, shelter, money – whatever we had. In short, we would do anything for him that he asked. And yet he does ask, all the time, but we do not necessarily respond. The bible is clear about what is expected of us, and that is our guide to a Christian way of life. So what is the difference?

One important reason might be that we do not take the above passage from Matthew seriously enough; we do not see Jesus in the people we meet or in the desperate people we read about in the papers every day. For isn't that the implication of Matthew's words, that we should see Jesus in everyone and treat them as though we were dealing with God himself?

Of course, one does not treat the messenger or, in this case, the substitute, as we would God himself, that would be impractical. But we do need to think about how we should react with all these people in the light of Matthew's words. If, as he says, we are dealing with God through everyone we meet, we should be generous, truthful, welcoming, forgiving, tolerant, interested and all the other things laid out in the bible. In fact, we should deal with all these people as though we were dealing with God – for *just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.*

Now that leads us to a consideration of how we treat refugees, asylum seekers, the disadvantaged, oppressed and frightened and, indeed, everyone whom we currently wish would go away! In this way, one simple little passage has led us into very tricky waters indeed without a chart showing the safe way through. Answers on a postcard, please.

**ELY DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION**

**QUIET DAY**

Led by The Rev'd Michael Banyard, Diocesan Chaplain

**Tuesday 14 September 2021 10 – 2.30**

**St Mary's Church Burwell**

***Mike writes: "In the Bible you can find many interesting and diverse questions. This day is a great opportunity for learning and reflecting on some key biblical questions. These may well impact all our lives today."***

Please bring your own picnic lunch. Tea/coffee will be provided in mugs as risk assessments are already in place: mugs are cleaned in a dishwasher. Please bring your own mug/cup if you prefer.

We are aware that Government advice on social distancing/ numbers attending etc may change by September, so there will be an update on arrangements in the September newsletter. If you have any questions/suggestions etc, please ring Helen Banyard on 01353 969304.

The Praying Our Faith Team have produced something different for the newsletter this month - with summer holidays coming up we've written some book reviews to share with fellow members that we've read recently and have helped or inspired us. Hope you enjoy them - there certainly are a variety and I hope there will be something for everyone.

*Della Fletcher*

I offer two books, one that we have read in Trumpington church reading group and one which I have read and have offered to the group for our Autumn book.

**Phoebe** - A story - by Paula Gooder (Biblical scholar, author and speaker).

Available as paperback or on Kindle Published by Hodder & Stoughton

This a first novel by a well-known theologian about Phoebe a deacon of the church at Cencreae and St Paul's teaching in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. It is a wonderful insight into the life and faith of the early church.

**You can't hide the Sun** by John McCarthy. (A journey through Israel and Palestine)

Black Swan Edition 2013 available in paperback

A personal journey back where he was held hostage to try and understand the day-to-day complexities of being a Palestinian Arab in modern-day Israel. It was published in 2011, is easy to read and I learnt a lot about the problems that still face these people

*Joanna Sanders*

Two books which I have really enjoyed (historical fiction) are

**The Damask Rose** by Carol McGrath published by Headline Accent 2021 Paperback ordered through the Mobile Library which visits Balsham twice a month.

This is the story of one of the She Wolves (I think there were three) of England about Eleanor of Castille who was married to Edward 1 (Longshanks and Hammer of the Scots) whom she adored and stuck by his side whether in war or peace.

They married when they were 12 and 13 and she had a baby whilst they were living in Gascony in France (which belonged to England) and before Edward was King. Sadly the baby died as did so many of other children to whom she gave birth – 15 daughters and 3 sons. The book covers the period 1264 (time of Simon de Montfort) to Queen Eleanor's death in 1290. Each place where her funeral cortege stopped en route from Lincoln to London crosses were erected namely Waltham Cross and Charing Cross being the best known. They were both very devout in their prayers, worship and visiting shrines.

**The Silken Rose** by Carol McGrath also published by Headline Accent perhaps in 2020 in Paperback also ordered through the Mobile Library.

This covers an earlier period of the 13th Century Ailenor of Provence (Savoy) married to Henry 111 son of King John in her early teens. They were devoted to each other although Henry 111 was not a particularly good King. He rebuilt Westminster Abbey and many cathedrals and castles were built the thirteenth century. I learned a lot about life in the thirteenth century. The Court moved around a great deal always with a large retinue and often stayed abroad for months at a time. Queen Ailenor outlived Henry and was a devoted grandmother to many of the surviving children of Edward 1 and Queen Eleanor.



*Mike Banyard, Chaplain.*

**Candles in the Dark by Rowan Williams SPCK**

“Faith, hope and love in a time of pandemic” follows the main title, and gives some clues about what this small but very effective and helpful book is all about.

From March to September 2020, Rowan Williams wrote weekly meditations for the congregation of his parish church in Cambridge. *Candles in the Dark* will be welcomed by all who are looking for light in these dark times. Written with warmth and compassion, it will challenge you, nourish you and leave you with fresh resources for faith to guide you through a still uncertain future.

Each chapter, and therefore meditation, in this short book is about three pages long and easily assimilated. After a short preface, Rowan writes twenty-six short but deep commentaries and reflections on the pandemic and how we might pray and respond as Christians. There is also an epilogue.

I can recommend this book as most helpful in our current circumstances and one which brings hope and direction on the journey. It is also very reasonably priced.

*Helen Banyard*

**Landscapes of Prayer by Margaret Silf. Published by Lion Hudson.**

This is a small hardback book with plenty of beautiful photographs, to which I turn regularly and always find something new to inspire me. Margaret Silf is a writer and retreat leader. In this book she explores rich variety of landscapes from gardens to mountains from the seashore to the night sky. Each of the nine areas are independent and invite us to meet with the mystery of God in our own lives as we explore each landscape. Enjoy travelling and discover more about God, yourself and prayer.

*Gill Utlin*

**The Other Side of the Dale by Gervaise Phinn. A penguin book.**

This is one of the earliest in a series of books by Mr. Phinn.

Gervaise describes his appointment as County Inspector of Schools in North Yorkshire. He reveals in this wonderfully warm and humorous account that his first year was a steep learning curve. He has a unique understanding and love of children and also a wonderful gift for storytelling. This is a book to relax in and enjoy.

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I hope that many of our members will be able to meet in person over the summer. It seems that government restrictions may ease and as most people will have had their vaccinations and there must be *some* sunny days, meeting outside in good weather may be possible. This is one of the prayers we used at the first meeting together of our branch last week.

*Hazel*

*Ever-present God, you walk with us through good times and bad,  
mountain top and valley deep, your footsteps our guide, hands our support.  
Ever-present God, you are close to us when life is smooth or rough,  
in wholeness and brokenness, your healing our hope, your touch our desire.  
Ever-present God, bring comfort and peace and the warmth of your presence  
and we shall fear no thing, for you are with us, always. Amen*

# SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2021

Faith In Action, September 2021

Jean Webb, Coordinator [jmw35n@gmail.com](mailto:jmw35n@gmail.com)

I hope everyone is looking forward to a bit more “normality” in our lives, and being able to meet together again.

If you have been wondering how to support the Afghans who are coming to this area, “**Love In A Bag Cambridgeshire**” are collecting, and aim to have collection points across the county. Their Wish List is similar to the items we would put in Welcome packs for the refugees and hostels.

*Shampoo and conditioner, toothbrush and paste, soap/shower gel, deodorant (and sanitary products).*

*Extras – a selection from perfume/aftershave, cosmetics, baby/face wipes, tissues, hairbrush/comb/accessories, hand cream/body lotion, stationery, socks, underpants.*

**No** scissors/tweezers/razors or other sharps. No food or perishables

All items must be brand new, and in sealed packaging for hygiene. Please put in a bag or Rucksack, and label for man/woman. Include a handwritten note to show someone cares.

In Ely, there is a collection point at The Kings Arms in St Mary's Street. .

“Love In A Bag Cambridgeshire” has a Facebook page.

100 Afghan families are going to the Peterborough area in the next three weeks. Mary's Child (see below) is helping with the re-homing. Jean will take a car load when they are ready to accept.

If this appeal becomes oversubscribed, the bags will be passed on to other agencies supporting the homeless.

I'm very pleased to announce that we have a new charity to support in the north of the diocese. Based in Peterborough (the south of the River Nene is in Ely Diocese) **Mary's Child** offers Love, Care and Support to families and individuals. This fits so well with our M U aims to support those whose lives have met with adversity.

We can support in all the ways we currently support the Women's Refuges and Hostels in our area, with toiletries, household items, baby and children's equipment and knits, as well as offering larger furniture and domestic goods. Mary's Child seeks to support all areas of need, assisting with debt, benefits, housing etc. and would welcome any professional help and expertise.

Above All, Mary's Child asks for our prayers for their work.

More information is on their website [www.maryschild.org.uk](http://www.maryschild.org.uk)

Is anyone aware of any charities that have aims similar to ours, that collect postage stamps and old postcards? Sadly our outlets have closed recently. Many thanks to Joanna Sanders who has been forwarding them for us for many years.

Finally, thank you for all the recent donations. You have kept Maureen and I busy in recent months!

Sherly, the Dementia Nurse at Hinchinbrooke was very pleased to receive soft twiddle muffs and lap blankets. She sent this thank you, to all who have contributed.

Jean

Dear Jean,

Thanks a lot for bringing in the lap blankets and muffs.

We are very grateful for what you are doing for our patients.

You and your team take care and be safe.

Kind Regards

Sherly



### **Re-imagining Mothers' Union**

The views of all Mothers' Union members are really important to help shape the future of our organisation.

Across our membership, we know that there are many exciting and interesting ideas and initiatives that can help build our future – so to gather the thoughts and experiences of as many members as possible, we would like to invite you to host a Re-imagining Mothers' Union Coffee Morning/afternoon tea or discuss the questions at one of your branch meetings in September or October.

*When Covid-19 hit in March 2020, the way we lived our lives changed. We couldn't do some things that we had previously taken for granted and we did things we had previously never dreamed of doing – and in different ways.*

*Now as the restrictions on our lives are easing, it is a good time to reflect on what we have learned during the pandemic and take this as a positive way of re-imagining what Mothers' Union could and should be like going forward, to make belonging to this organisation important to all our members and attractive to potential members.*

**Three key questions for Mothers' Union are:**

- **In the past year or so, what have we discovered about what we want to keep in Mothers' Union - and what don't we need?**
- **During this time, what are the ideas or actions you've seen in your diocese that we can build on for the future?**
- **What holds us back from moving forward – and why?**

Please send your feedback to Hazel Williams by the end of October at the latest so that I can collate it to send on to Mary Sumner House. I am happy to have individual replies too.



Food for thought.

I expect that everyone reading this will know of Delia Smith, either as a kitchen hero or through her connections to Norwich City football club. Not everyone will know she is a catholic (attending daily mass and prayers), is 80 years old and has written a book titled “You Matter”, due to be published next March. I discovered this courtesy of The Times newspaper and Andrew Billen, who wrote a piece in the paper’s “Comment” section recently.

In her book she says that we need to step back from the chaos and get to know ourselves better: that everyone is unique and has a special place. She claims that we under-estimate what human life means and what it is and why it is. We have this immense universe in which it takes millions of years for light to reach this little place we call Earth, yet it has human life – the only life we know about in the entire universe.

In her estimation the only way we can find meaning is to look at who we are and she describes it thus: “You have only just met me. If you really wanted to know me you would need to spend time with me, otherwise you wouldn’t know me. Therefore, human beings need to spend time with themselves in order to know themselves.”

I think that is self-evidently true and suggest that, by extension, it must be equally true to state that to know God you need to spend time with God. I have found reading the bible from cover to cover is one way of doing that. I am now well over three-quarters of the way through (actually on day 313 of 365 day reading plan) and the time spent reading and then considering what I have read must add up to over 150 hours in total. In that time I have made many discoveries about what the bible is and, from the different approaches taken by the writers of the many constituent books, a “picture” of God as a being (albeit a very different being from any encountered on earth).

Throughout the bible we are told we must love our God. Easy to say, but it is hard to love someone you do not know. So, getting to know him is just a step to the big prize of loving him. There are many ways of spending time with God and getting to know him better, such as meditation and prayer, but the important point to understand is that the effort is worth it. Without spending time with God there is no way to know God and without that knowledge one cannot love God. So “thank you” Delia for your forthcoming book and, as I started this piece – food for thought!

**ELY DIOCESAN MOTHERS’ UNION****QUIET DAY**

Led by The Rev’d Michael Banyard, Diocesan Chaplain

**Tuesday 14 September 2021 10 – 2.30**

**St Mary’s Church Burwell**

***Mike writes: “In the Bible you can find many interesting and diverse questions. This day is a great opportunity for learning and reflecting on some key biblical questions. These may well impact all our lives today.”***

Please bring your own picnic lunch. Tea/coffee will be provided in mugs (mugs are cleaned in a dishwasher) Please bring your own mug/cup if you prefer. Face masks will be needed.

**CONTACT DETAILS Charity no. 251394**

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

Ros home 01223 861846

[roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel home 01638 743897

[hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

**MU Thursday Prayer on Zoom (start at 11am)**

**Time: Sept.16th 2021 10:45 am**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87298227811>

**Meeting ID: 872 9822 7811**

**Presented by Catherina Griffiths – The Gift of Harvest**

**Annual Gathering 2021– Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 11am – 2.30pm**

The content for this event has been shaped by the member steering group and is coming together - the day looks as if it will be informative and inspiring.

Basic information about the event can be found on the Events page of the website ([www.mothersunion.org/get-involved/whats-on/general-meeting-2020](http://www.mothersunion.org/get-involved/whats-on/general-meeting-2020)).

A more detailed programme, worship resources and joining instructions will be added to the MU website shortly.

It is with sadness that we have to announce that Marjorie Nash has died aged 90 years. Her funeral was on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 at St Peter's Church, March. A number of members of Mothers' Union attended. Marjorie was a very active member of St Peter's Church, past leader of St Peter's Mothers' Union and an Archdeaconry Vice- President in Ely Diocese Mothers' Union. She was very well known within the Mothers' Union family and had been a member of St Peter's Mothers' Union for 54 years and so will be sadly missed. We offer our condolences to her family and our prayers and thoughts are with them at this sad time.

Regards

Pat Case

Barbara Midgley's husband Jeremy, also a MU Diocesan Member, died suddenly on 14<sup>th</sup> July. The funeral was on 3<sup>rd</sup> August in St Mary's Church, Houghton. Please remember Barbara and their son Jonathan, a lay clerk in the choir at Ely Cathedral, in your prayers.

Many of you will have seen the recent diocesan website announcement that Julia Flack died of a heart attack on 24<sup>th</sup> July. She was an honorary vice-president of Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union when her husband John was Bishop of Huntingdon. He now lives in the Wakefield Diocese after retiring from being an honorary Assistant Bishop in Peterborough diocese. We offer our condolences and prayers to her family.

# OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2021

All members, family and friends are  
invited to our

**COMMISSIONING SERVICE**

**Saturday October 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**2pm in Ely**

**Celebrant and Preacher**

**Rt Revd Stephen Conway, Bishop of Ely**

**DETAILS OF THE VENUE WILL BE SENT OUT ON  
THE WEEKEND OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup>/10<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER**





## “Celebrating 145 years of Mothers’ Union” Garden Party.

Many of us were able to meet up in July at the Garden Party held in the Bishop of Ely’s garden: “Celebrating 145 years of Mothers’ Union”. We were blessed with fine weather and enjoyed afternoon tea together. Bishop Stephen spoke encouragingly about the work Mothers’ Union had continued to do, and Hazel Williams updated us with the latest MU news. There was a card and gift stall, a Worldwide Links display, and a raffle was held. Together with donations and raffle proceeds, £286 was raised for MU Projects.



### **Modern Slavery: Lecture, Exhibition and Craft Project Ely Cathedral, October 2021.**

See the Cathedral website for more info about the **Exhibition of Paintings** by London-based Syrian artist Sara Shamma (<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/exhibition-sara-shamma-modern-slavery>)

and

**Community Craft Project & Exhibition** (<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/modern-slavery-craft-exhibition>)

There will also be a **Lecture by Author and Broadcaster Louise Hulland**, speaking about her book “Stolen Lives”

(<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/modern-slavery-lecture-louise-hulland>)

As you know MU is working with the Clewer Initiative nationally as well as locally, seeking to bring an end to modern day slavery, and local MU members are involved in the Craft Project.

**Balsham** MU reconvened in September with a get together on the patio at my house. A pleasant afternoon but only 8 of us out of 14 members. First meeting since Feb 2020. We did not try zoom as 50% of our members have not got the internet. Not quite sure where we go from here as a branch as we are all very old - youngest are in their late 70s!  
 All best wishes  
 Joanna



Don't forget to ask your members about their views on the questions on Re-imagining MU posed in the September Newsletter and send them on to me.

**Mothers Union Diocesan Quiet Day**

**Helen Banyard Praying our Faith Co - Ordinator**

We were delighted that 22 members braved the deluge to support our Quiet Day on 14th September at Burwell Parish Church. We did wonder how many would drive through the torrential rain to attend the first Diocesan event since the first lockdown. So a very big thank you to everyone who took part and to our Chaplain Mike Banyard for leading the day and closing with a Eucharist for Holy Cross Day. Also to Hazel Williams and Wendy Smith for ensuring the smooth running of the practicalities of their parish church.

**Thursday Prayer - New Time of 10.30am**

On 21st October Thursday Prayer will be zoomed from Ely Cathedral Presbytery where members and supporters are invited to gather together in person for prayers for Peace in our World led by Sue Claydon at 10.30am. We trust that this will see the return of the regular opportunity for us to meet together for Thursday Prayer while still providing the chance to join us on zoom which many enjoy. Either way we hope you will join us at 10.30am

**16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence - advance notice.**

Members are being encouraged to wear **purple scarves** and join at 1.03pm on 27<sup>th</sup> November for a Global Day to remember the 1in 3 women affected by gender-based violence.





## St.Neots MU Branch

These photos were taken at our first branch meeting after lockdown on 2nd September, when Catherina Griffiths gave us a virtual tour of Assisi and talked about the life of St Francis. Jenny Pepper is shown selling MU cards with the help of her daughter Natasha.



## MU members in Tanzania

I'm attaching a photograph of MU members singing in Nachingwea, Tanzania. Our village (Stapleford) has had a link with this town for 40 years and we support social and medical projects there. The diocese of Masasi is 100 years old in 2021 and there are special celebrations to mark it.

Best wishes  
Hilary Street



**CONTACT DETAILS Charity no. 251394**

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

**Ros home 01223 861846 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)**

**Hazel home 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)**



## St Mary's Ely MU Branch

## Enrolment and Welcome of New Members

We were delighted to start meeting again this term on 8th September, beginning with our Holy Communion Service led by Revd Mike Banyard, Ely Diocesan MU Chaplain.

Helen Banyard enrolled new members: Bertha Rowell and Betty Flack; and welcomed new members joining from other branches: Hilary Gripper, Mary Richards, Margaret Leeke and Eileen Thompson. Philly-Jane Issacs will be welcomed as a new member at our next meeting.

The readings were Galatians 4:4-7, and Luke 1:46-55. In his sermon, Mike spoke about Mary's positive response to God's message when she was told she would give birth to Jesus. Her song of prayer, which is the basis of the "Magnificat" is at the heart of Christian worship.

The MU Theme for this year "Rebuilding Hope and Confidence" is an important message as we think about the many world problems. MU Members are called to pray, listen in prayer, and live out God's love, in our everyday lives, wherever we are.

During August members had collected money in jam jars as part of the Summer of Hope "Count Your Blessings" Appeal, which raised £143.



### Thursday Prayer returns to the Cathedral

**21<sup>st</sup> October at 10.30am**

**In the Presbytery**

**Peace in our world presented by Sue Claydon**

**Also on Zoom**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81975691267?pwd=ZS9EU284Y3piZlQ3b2c4c1NXSzk4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 819 7569 1267

Passcode: 336639

Everyone received the Ely Diocesan MU Annual Report earlier this year in April. This outlined all the activities of the previous year. The finances of our charity have now been passed by the Independent Examiner and sent off to the Charity Commission. If you would like to view them, they will shortly be on the Ely Diocesan website under the Mothers' Union section. If you are unable use the internet please get in touch and I will send them to you.

It has been agreed that the subscriptions for next year will remain at £20, which will all go to our national charity. Members have been very generous raising money for national and local campaigns and still have the option of giving to the Diocesan General Fund if they wish.

## REFLECTION FOR OCTOBER

Philip Baker (30<sup>th</sup> September 2021)

In the classic novel by Charles Dickens “*Oliver Twist*”, the following passage appears just over half way through: “*Men who look on nature, and their fellow-men, and cry that all is dark and gloomy, are in the right; but the sombre colours are reflections from their own jaundiced eyes and hearts. The real hues are delicate, and need a clearer vision.*” Now what do these words, from a work of fiction, have to do with us? I suggest that, fiction or not, this passage states a truth, which is that we see things, and interpret them, in a particular way according to our background, our experiences and even our mood at the time. For example, I see a wonderful sunset and think “God’s world has perfection all through it and we should take more care of it” whilst someone else will see the manifestation of a physical phenomenon concerning the refraction of light. Both thoughts are true, but it demonstrates how one’s own viewpoint causes the focus to be different. So, how we understand what we see is actually dependant on ourselves and is not a fixed, unalterable “truth”.

Now this has a bearing on how we deal with some of the big issues of our time, such as gender-based violence (especially against women), modern day slavery, refugee crisis and all those living in fear, pain, poverty and ignorance. We were discussing these issues and the potential Mothers’ Union reaction, both local and national, to them, at our last Branch Meeting and the quoted passage above might explain some of the difficulties we have in finding solutions – if we all see the problems differently, how can we ever agree the solutions!

We need to shine a light on those things we can agree as “facts” so that a common focus on each issue becomes possible. A girl might appear to dress provocatively, but she is not inviting a predatory and unwelcome approach – she may be exhibiting naivety, but that is all. A refugee is not responsible for the armed insurrection in their home country – they almost certainly would prefer to remain where they were born but for circumstances beyond their control. A person trapped in a modern slavery situation (such as a car wash operation or by illegal gang-masters) is only trying to earn money for their family to ease their poverty and hunger – they cannot recognise the depths to which some unscrupulous individuals will go in order to make a profit. But in all these examples there is a tendency to see the victim as somehow responsible for their own predicament, so why should we help? Or we see a problem too great for us to deal with, it is too “gloomy”, when actually all that is needed is a little sympathy and support.

When we see or hear of someone in a bad way, we need to look beyond that first impression, which is always subjective, and seek an objective view so we can see the “real hues”. If we could then find that common view, based on the bare facts discernible only by a clear vision, some of the injustices that exist around the world and even here closer to home would not be tolerated. The Mothers’ Union offers unique opportunities to help those in need, and does so to a great extent. But if we could see with that “clearer vision” from the quoted passage, rather than through the filter of our own “jaundiced eyes and hearts”, maybe together we could achieve so much more.



**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

# NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2021



## COMMISSIONING SERVICE

**ELY CATHEDRAL 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

**Commissioning Service, Saturday 23 October.** Celebrant and Preacher: The Rt Revd Stephen Conway, Bishop of Ely. A selection of photos taken at the Service to Commission the new Board of MU Trustees in the Diocese of Ely for the next Triennium (2022-2024) compiled into a video. Click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qCzWCXf5o>





**COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS.**

**Debbie Tye – Task Group Leader**

We have more new YouTube video links to share with you for September and October Thursday Prayers.

**September Thursday Prayer:** The Gift of Harvest. Led by Catherina Griffiths.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0BoWDYakhs>

**October Thursday Prayer:** Women and Peace. Led by Sue Claydon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHVHrPSz8wc>

We hope you like watching these videos and thanks go to Debbie for making it possible for so many to enjoy them. Below is a reminder of trustees for the new triennium.

Diocesan President - Hazel Williams. Vice-Presidents – Jo Wibberley, Gill Uttin, Helen Banyard & Maureen Haigh. Task Group Leaders - Jean Webb, Catherina Griffiths, Christine Holt & Debbie Tye. Safeguarding – Kristy Leach



## Thursday Prayer

Helen Banyard - Praying our Faith task group leader.

A big thank you to Sue Claydon for organising the practicalities in setting up a successful October Thursday Prayer from Ely Cathedral and everyone who attended either in person or by zoom. It was lovely to see you all and we could tell by both the smiles on the screen and in the Presbytery that being able to pray together was a joy.

We hope to repeat the experience on Thursday 25th November at 10.30am both on zoom and in the Cathedral Presbytery when Jo Wibberley will lead us. Her focus will be Whitworth House in Cambridge which is one of the practical ways we support young women throughout the year and will help us in our prayers for the start of our 16 Days of Activism Campaign.

### **16 Days of Activism Against Gender - Based Violence and Abuse 25th November - 10th December 2021**

Ideas for your involvement.

- 1 Everyone is welcome to visit our MU display ( just to the right inside the Cathedral West Door ) showing our involvement with this world wide Campaign.
- 2 Attend either in person or on zoom our Thursday Prayers from Ely Cathedral on Thursday 25th November at 10.30am
- 3 Join other MU members and supporters outside the West End of the Cathedral to form a circle to remember and support 1 in 3 women throughout the world who suffer from physical or mental abuse. We hope every third person will wear a purple scarf over their eyes/mouth to advertise # no more 1 in 3 at 1.03pm on Saturday 27th November for a 3-minute silence.
- 4 If you are unable to come to Ely consider doing something similar with your branch or deanery on Global Day ( Saturday 27th November) either in or outside you church or hold a 3-minute silence in your own home.
- 5 Use the 16 Days of Activism Prayer Diary to focus your prayers on those living with Gender- Based Violence. Read the articles in our magazine - Connected, to help in our understanding the impact of GBV across society.
- 6 Consider placing a display of the 16 Days of Activism in your Church. The 2 prayers on Page 18 of the prayer diary are a good start - your display needn't be large but make it thought provoking. Some branches place a Prayer tree in their church while others use a piece of netting on which to hang prayers. Anything you display may cause people to stop, think, recognise and pray for instances they know and perhaps to act or speak out.
- 7 Don't forget the back page of your 16 Days Prayer Diary makes 3 bookmarks - share them with others.

**CONTACT DETAILS** Charity no. 251394  
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>

Ros home 01223 86184 [roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)

Hazel home 01638 743897 [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

**Thursday Prayer**  
**25<sup>th</sup> November at 10.30am**  
**In the Presbytery of Ely Cathedral**  
**Whitworth House by Jo Wibberley**

**Also on Zoom**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

Meeting ID: 838 4780 9128  
Passcode: 338053

## Faith In Action Coordinator – Jean Webb

I've had a lovely response to our Christmas Giving Wish List, and thank everyone who has already donated, or enquired about supporting in this way.

Re stamps for Moggerhanger Hospice, Margaret Bails phone number should be **01480 472493**. Sorry for the misprint last month.

Just a reminder that when buying gift vouchers, to please check that the cards have been activated. Some stores offer gift receipts with each purchase.

Several members have recently asked if we want knitting. Soft twiddle muffs, lap blankets, clothing for 6 month + babies, and adult warm clothing are always needed, as are general domestic items and toiletries, and we can distribute where they are most needed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs Mary Hay

From Wendy Smith, Branch Leader

### Died 15th October 2021 aged 94

*Mary was born in Melton Mowbray on 13th May 1927. She was educated at St. Francis Xavier convent in the town where she became head girl. Although she was an Anglican all her life, following her schooling she inclined towards the Anglo - Catholic tradition of the Church of England.*

*During the 1970's she moved to Hereford and was appointed Diocesan Secretary and Treasurer at the Cathedral Branch of the Mothers' Union at that time.*

*In the 1980's she moved to Saffron Walden and became enrolling member in 1982 and Presiding member of SW Deanery in 1986.*

*In 1992 she moved to Elm near Wisbech and continued as a Mothers' Union member until the branch folded and from then on, she attended as a member of St. Peter's Mothers Union (now called Wisbech Mother's Union)*

A long and faithful servant of the Lord and loyal member of the Mothers' Union. *Hazel*

\*\*\*\*\*

This powerful poem was part of Thursday Prayer led by Sue Claydon in October and is being reproduced here in case you missed it.

## The Power of Forgiveness by Sheila Sakara, age 12, Zimbabwe

There is power in forgiveness  
If you fail to forgive  
You contaminate every relationship in your life  
Watch out!  
Others can initiate events or behaviour  
But it is you who chooses how to react  
Acknowledge history  
Without being controlled by it  
Be committed to resolve  
Rather than perpetuate hatred  
There is power in commitment to a peaceful world.

My thanks go to all who have returned comments and answers to the questions on Re-imagining the Mothers' Union. I will hear viewpoints from across Britain and Ireland at the conference in January and report back.



**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families



# DECEMBER 21 AND JANUARY 22 NEWSLETTER

First Coming by Madeleine L' Engle (1918 - 2007)



He did not wait till the world was ready,  
till men and nations were at peace.  
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,  
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.  
He came when the need was deep and great.  
He dined with sinners in all their grime,  
tuned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.  
In joy He came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.  
To a world like ours, of anguished shame  
He came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,  
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.  
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh  
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane  
to raise our songs with joyful voice,  
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,  
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

## WAVE OF PRAYER

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union is linked with five other Dioceses across the world and each year we pray for each other frequently as well as a specially chosen three days which appear in our Prayer Calendar.

This year it is on the 10th, 11th and 12th December and Deaneries across our diocese will take it in turn to pray for our link diocese - Shyogwe in Rwanda, Lusaka in Zambia, Sokoto and Ika in Nigeria and Karimnagar in India.

All of our link diocese has had Covid problems. Shortage of vaccines, restrictions on travel, social distancing, sanitising and loss of loved ones are the norm but we here have not had to contend with constant deadly attacks on vulnerable people, kidnapping of students, greatly increased pregnancy rates and poor harvests. Where people have been able to meet together services are now restricted to only 1hr 30mins!

Prayer is a powerful tool and it is uplifting to know that the branches and deaneries in countries far away are praying for us in Ely Diocese.



## 16 days of Activism Against gender Violence



Diocesan Mothers' Union braved strong winds and heavy showers to stand together in silence at 1.03pm on Saturday 27 November for 3 minutes to raise awareness for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. This international campaign from 25

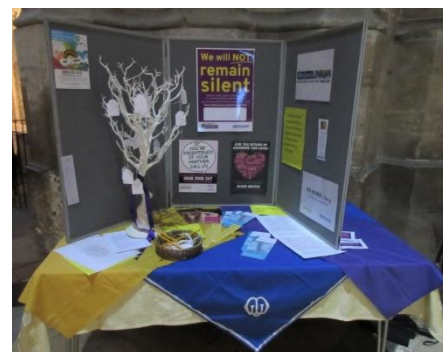
November - 10 December, has been supported by Mothers' Union for many years.

Standing in silence outside the West End of Ely Cathedral, members were campaigning on this Global Day of Action, building on last year's focus of #nomore1in3 (no more one in three), highlighting the fact that 1 in 3 women worldwide will be impacted by some form of violence.

MU Members wore purple scarves in their solidarity and support of victims, and were joined by Canon Jessica Martin from the Cathedral and Diocesan MU Chaplain, Revd Mike Banyard. Our thanks go to those members who braved the elements to stand alongside those silently suffering from abuse.

Just to the right inside the main west door of Ely Cathedral is a display that will remain during the Campaign, which includes further information regarding the 16 Days of Activism Campaign and includes the work of the MU throughout the year supporting Women's Refuges locally.

For more info visit: <https://www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2021> and <https://16dayscampaign.org/>



It was good to see how the 16 Day campaign has grown over the years, with this year **Cambridgeshire Police** promoting the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25<sup>th</sup> by making the White Ribbon Day Promise, to never commit, excuse or remain silent about domestic violence and to encourage others to do the same. More information is available on the domestic abuse pages of the police website.

**Cambridgeshire Libraries** have been working with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse Partnership <https://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/> to inform staff about domestic abuse and enable libraries to offer appropriate support and signposting for victims. In every library you can use a library computer to seek information and support without the risk of an abuser tracking your search. Library computers are free to use and cannot be monitored. The following libraries offer an enhanced "safe space", where library staff can offer a private room, phone and contact details for appropriate support services: Cambridge Central, Clay Farm, Ely, Huntingdon, March, St Ives, St Neots, Sawston, Wisbech.



## A REFLECTION

*Philip Baker (10<sup>th</sup> November 2021)*

On 17<sup>th</sup> October India Knight wrote in the Times "Comment" - "There's only one kind of good book and that is the book – any book, in any genre – that makes you wish you could stay on the sofa with it all day." For me that book is the Bible; it not only holds the best story that has ever been written but, to the reader who is prepared to linger and consider, it delivers riches in thoughts and insights into human (and divine) purpose. As many of you may recall, following the death of Susan, my lifelong companion, I embarked on a 365-day reading plan of the Bible. A year having passed I have reached the end of that plan and the entire Bible has been read, cover to cover. And it was good! So good that I have bought a different translation and started again! It seems to me that as I now understand the "shape" of the Bible, what is in it, how it "works" so to speak, I might find a greater depth of meaning by studying a different translation. And so far, so good, the plan seems to be working (although I am still in Genesis!).

One of the things which even a non-reader of the bible will know is the importance of "Love" (at least in the New Testament after Jesus showed the way and changed Old Testament beliefs). Probably the best-known example of us being exhorted to "love" is in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13. If you are unsure, I urge you to read it. Yet there is still so little evidence of the world following this simple guide contained in the most-read book of all time. The world's super-rich are vying with each other to be the first to travel in space, to have the biggest super yacht, the most glamorous home. The world's dictators are growing rich on money diverted from aid intended for their starving populations. The world's terrorists are busy blowing each other and their perceived "enemies" up. To serve what end? I see only self-serving motives and little true philanthropy, or love for one's fellow human.

There is hope that attitudes may be changing. On the day recently that the veteran reporter, John Simpson, broke down whilst describing the plight of a widowed Afghan mother of 7 children, David Beasley, executive director of the UN World Food Programme, said that 23 million (yes, million) people in Afghanistan are facing starvation. Addressing world leaders and billionaires, he continued "when there's \$400 trillion of wealth on the earth today – shame on us if we let one child die from hunger, I don't care where that child is, shame on us." All this as Christmas approaches, when we remember the birth of one very special baby.

We can all do something; perhaps just little things, but collectively they can make big things happen. The Mothers' Union is doing things, the church is doing things, it is up to us all to do things. It is just a pity that more people, especially those in positions of authority, do not read the bible. If you read and understand the simple messages it contains it makes you appreciate that following its rules could put all things right.

**PS** If you enjoyed reading 1 Corinthians 13, read on – chapter 14 is pretty good too! Better still, start at chapter 1. It is a lovely letter, written by Paul to straying members of the church in Corinth around AD54, but still retaining meaning pertinent today – perhaps even more so!

### **Branch Leaders and Officers**

I have been heartened to know how many of you have enjoyed this expanded Newsletter. In the absence of Grapevine it has been our primary method of communication over most of the last two years but does not work if every member does not receive their own copy. One copy circulated at a meeting does not give time for people to read 'and inwardly digest'. If someone in the branch, not necessarily the branch leader, can circulate to others on e-mail we can arrange for them to receive a copy from Ros. It is also a perfectly valid use of branch funds to pay to have it copied for those not on e-mail and to post to them, although many branches find someone who lives close by who will take on that responsibility for just one or two members, and deliver to them (and have a chat). I am always happy to have news of what is happening at your branch.

*Christmas Blessings from Hazel*



At the last Provincial Conference of the Triennium, it was a time for goodbyes to many familiar faces. Nikki Sweatman finishes her 6 years as Zonal trustee and Mike Banyard also leaves after his time as Provincial Chaplain (pictured with Canterbury Provincial President Kathryn Anderson) and they will be greatly missed. The small picture shows 4 of the 6 Diocesan Presidents (out of over 30) who will continue into the next triennium to complete their six years.



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A reminder that **membership subs** next year will remain at £20. The national element is £20 and the Diocese are not levying anything this year. Please try to pay before the end of January so that it can be passed on promptly to Mary Sumner House.

A reminder too that if your branch would like to have a speaker but you do not have enough money to pay their travel, the Diocese has a fund that will give small **travel grants** of £25. Talk to Hazel for further information.

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## Faith in Action

Our grateful thanks for the amazing response from our members and their friends who have supported the Christmas Wish appeal this year. The list was sent out with November's Newsletter and included supermarket gift vouchers for £5 or £10. We are happy to receive money and buy the gift vouchers for you if it is a problem for you.

if you have any more items to send, please contact

**Maureen Haigh**, Local Projects Officer 01353 749760 [gmhaigh@talk21.com](mailto:gmhaigh@talk21.com)

**Jean Webb** Faith In Action Coordinator 01353 658581 [jmw35n@gmail.com](mailto:jmw35n@gmail.com)

Or ask your branch leader.

**CONTACT DETAILS Charity no. 251394**  
<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>  
**Ros home 01223 86184**  
[roswright1@gmail.com](mailto:roswright1@gmail.com)  
**Hazel home 01638 743897**  
[hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com)

**Thursday Prayer 16<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am**  
**In the Presbytery of Ely Cathedral**  
**Debbie Tye speaking on Advent**

**Also on Zoom**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

Meeting ID: 838 4780 9128  
 Passcode: 338053  
 (for the 'eagle eyed' yes it is the same as last time)

## Wisbech MU



In September, The Wisbech & District Mothers' Union met together for the first time since the lockdown of March 2020, and how good it felt to be back together again. The group decided to have a go at the prayer plaits as a way of focussing back to being members of the MU again. The ribbon was duly purchased (in Devon where our Treasurer

spent a happy holiday this summer). Blue white and gold plaits were the order of the day, and, once the problem of getting started when you only have 1 pair of hands was solved with some nifty Sellotape to the table, everyone soon got the hang of it. The group made 30 plaits and they are now resplendently adorning the south gates to the church for all to see, complete with the prayer. The pictures show the prayer plaits in place.

## Downham Market MU



Downham Market branch has been supporting The Swan Youth Project, a charity in the town that provides support for young people between 8 - 18 years of age. It offers a variety of activities, groups and courses, as well as 1:1 support for emerging mental health concerns, family support and young carers support. Our members throughout the year have been collecting products to support their Hygiene Bank, where anyone attending can access hygiene products free of charge. The photograph

shows members handing over a month's collection of products to Ann Foster, the CEO/Project Manager of the Swan Centre. She said "The support that the Mothers Union are able to give us, with their donations to the Hygiene Bank is vital for us as a small charity. We are very grateful to the group for their enthusiasm for our project".