



# Newsletter

## July & August 2025



### Leadership Conference at Liverpool Hope University



Jean and Hazel were delighted to attend the Britain & Ireland Leadership Conference 2025. It was hosted by our WWP, Kathleen Snow, the B&I Group (WW Trustees and Provincial Presidents) and the central charity staff team. The theme was **Stronger Together**, and **we explored membership growth, our 150<sup>th</sup> activities and celebrations as well as Strategic Planning**. Spot Jean and Hazel in the photo – we are there!

The focus of the conference was on how crucial it is that we build resources and tools to accelerate growth, and how the promotion of MU in 2026 will give us the unique opportunity to shine a light on MU for future generations and secure our future and that of the wider movement.

It was hard work in blistering heat, but with challenge brings opportunity, and everyone left committed to the production of a Diocesan 5 Year Plan that focuses on growth, succession planning, improving communications and a focus on reaching out to new audiences, to the clergy and the wider community.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that we are here in 150 years, and together as members, as dioceses, as a staff team and an elected board, we committed to the future of this wonderful movement.





This article and picture was submitted by Joanna Sanders who continues to be in touch with the church there. She says *'Many people fled to Port Sudan as it was originally a fairly safe haven but now drones are falling there'*.

## Sudan Church Review

Bishop Abdu and the Diocese of Port Sudan have been wonderfully hospitable opening up the diocesan compound in Port Sudan and people's homes to take in those who have been displaced from elsewhere. The women of the Mothers' Union openly shared their experience both as those displaced and those welcoming the displaced. In the church they are all one fellowship together within the Body of Christ although it is not always easy for either group to adapt to the needs of the other.

We sense this to be a time for opportunity for the church to grow and develop in new ways. Faith continues to inspire and sustain people amidst untold challenges.

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**Brampton branch** were delighted to welcome Jean Webb to their afternoon garden party to present their RISE UP Bronze Level Award. They achieved the award from their activities in 2024. They put up a RISE UP poster in their meeting place, dedicated one of their meetings to the RISE UP campaign with a service of prayers and reading. They invited guests to the service including the CEO of Peterborough Women's Refuge and Women's Aid representative and Managers of Hunts and Fenland Women's Refuge. They all attended. They then gifted 10 bags of "moving in" items such as body wash, soap, tooth brush, tooth paste, hair brush, sanitary pads, pack of tissues, hand cream shower puff, flannel, pair of bed socks, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant and hair bobbles. Some items were donated, otherwise they purchased the items from money donations collected at their meetings. Following the request from the managers, they also purchased new pillows, sheets and pillowcases to donate to the refuges. Also in 2024, as previous years, they bought chocolates and flowers for the mothers in the refuges on Mothering Sunday.

**Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on  
Zoom 10.30am on 17<sup>th</sup> July & 21<sup>st</sup> August**  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>  
**Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127**

## A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (16<sup>th</sup> June 2025)

The final verse of Isaiah 57 is possibly one of the most frequently stated in everyday conversation: “There is no peace for the wicked” (NIV). We all say it, often with humorous intent, but how often do we really think about what we are saying? The Good News Bible puts it slightly differently: “There is no safety for sinners”. That makes more sense now, doesn’t it. Isaiah 57 is all about good and evil and punishment, hence the final verse above. I love the Book of Isaiah because it speaks plainly (albeit in old-fashioned terms) and 57 explains why only those who turn to the ways of our Lord will be saved; only those who humbly do God’s work will receive His help.

It opens with a word of cheer for those who walk uprightly – “they find rest as they lie in death” (Isaiah 57:3). But how do we walk “uprightly”? This is explained in the following chapter, Isaiah 58:10-11 – “. . . if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs . . .” This seems to me to be another echo of John’s Gospel, 13:34 “A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another”. I have searched dozens of translations and they all say the same thing. Does this not seem to be the very essence of the Mothers’ Union? Giving ourselves into the service of those less fortunate, to help them out of their misery and into a better place; to love them as God loves us, as precious people deserving of love.

We are starting to consider how to celebrate 150 years of the Mothers’ Union next year. I find it hugely comforting that the movement started by Mary Sumner and followed passionately by thousands of people around the world ever since, is so deeply rooted in scripture, and that we can see the very direct connection between what we try to achieve and the way of life determined by God as leading to salvation and peace.

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### YAXLEY

St Peters, Yaxley, held a 24 hour prayer event in June. There were many stations with prayer resources for those attending to use. Yaxley Mothers' Union provided one which focused on the 'Rise Up' campaign, along with several Mothers' Union prayer books. *Irene*



#### Ely Diocesan M U contacts

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

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

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

**RISE UP** Please get in touch with Hazel if you fulfil the three requirements needed to apply for a Bronze Award. See June's newsletter or the MU website.

#### Dates for your Diary

**Quiet Day Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September at 10am**

Etheldreda House (new diocesan office), Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely CB6 3NX. Led by Rosey Feuall from Cherry Hinton.

**Autumn Diocesan Meeting Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October**

at St. Johns Church, Waterbeach. 9.30am – 2pm.  
Speaker – Julia Jameson. MU Zonal Trustee.

**Balsham Branch**, although few in number, enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon on Tuesday 17 June in the garden of Peter and Judy Neale where we have had many Garden Meetings. We had an interesting talk from a local resident on Her Garden Journey.

She has done a RHS course and plenty of practical gardening and has her own garden and an allotment. She has an area for cut flowers and came with a bucketful for members to share. Our hosts had prepared a Garden Quiz for us which was quite hard!

Two of our older members tied for first place. We then had a good tea and lots of chat sitting outside.



Joint quiz winners Ailsa and Lorna, Joanna Sanders, branch leader and secretary, and hosts Judy and Peter Neale.

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**St Neots MU Branch** held their annual garden party recently. In the past this has been held in the garden of one of our members but this year due to illness it was held in the Church Rooms and churchyard. This attracted a few passing folks who came to join us as well as members and friends. On the day we raised £245.45 for AFIA (with a few more donations since) and the tombola raised £100 for branch funds.



## COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye

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

“Putting on Christ”. Led by Jean Webb.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D19hInPeRw>

## THURSDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERT

If you are coming to Ely Cathedral for Thursday Prayer on 17th July, there is a Lunchtime Concert being held at 1.10pm, with a Piano Recital given by Julian Hellaby.

<https://www.elycathedral.org/events/lunchtime-concert-julian-hellaby-piano>

## Summer Garden Party in the Bishop's Garden



We held our annual celebration on a hot Saturday afternoon in June. Verinica Woodcock-Ellard, a very active and committed member for over 43 years received a Long Service Certificate. She is standing down as Branch Leader of Farcet after 25 years and Esther Charlton will be replacing her as new branch leader.



Donations and the raffle raised £144 which reflected the drop in attendance. Above is a very informative display showing the work taking place in some of our link diocese, put together by Irene Porter.

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Seven families have so far been booked this year for **AFIA** holidays at Hunstanton. Two have already been and the rest are going during the summer holidays. They are so excited that they and their children are able to get away, often for their first holiday ever.

## Summer of Hope

In war-torn regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo, mothers and families are being forced to flee violence. In fear for their lives, they often leave everything familiar behind - except for their children and a handful of seeds. **These seeds aren't just for survival. They're a symbol of faith, a sign that hope can still grow, even in the harshest conditions.** This summer, we invite you to take part in our [Summer of Hope appeal](#) - a season of giving, praying, planting and fundraising to support women, who are rebuilding their lives through literacy, faith, and community.



**Burwell Branch** held their June gathering at Burwell Museum. A wonderful place to visit either independantly or with a group. Many of the items on display bring back memories of my youth and there are items for every interest including room displays, the forge, WW 1 & 11 memorabilia, trains, carriages and a telephone switchboard complete with telephones that you need to dial (not press buttons). We finished off the afternoon with tea and cake and of course lots of chatter.

*Hazel Williams*

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Advance notice: Saturday 27th September 2025. **Canterbury Provincial Gathering** is at The King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES. **Tickets** £20 per person and are available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union)

Join Us, Join In is the theme. The event is open to all members and your friends too.

If you are attending please let Hazel know then we can put you in contact with others from our diocese.

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## Have you skills using a database?

**Mary Sumner House has a new database which means that we need to check what has been transferred over from the old one. We know some of the old information is inaccurate.**

**We are looking, ideally for a volunteer, who is familiar with using a database who could help the Ely Diocese Trustees check old information against new lists and input information from new members. This will be up to 450 members.**

**There is training available on the new database but you would need to already be familiar with the role and skills needed. A new laptop will be provided purely for MU data use.**

**Please get in touch with Hazel Williams on [hwill66@icloud.com](mailto:hwill66@icloud.com) if you are interested.**

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## NOTICE FOR BRANCH LEADERS AND SECRETARIES

**With reference to the above. Please send your up to date list of members for 2025 to Hazel (see above) so we can cross check that the correct information is being entered. Ros had so many problems with the old database that we want to make sure the new one is correct from the start.**

**If members have contact via e-mail it would help the diocese to have that information (no spam), and if they are happy to include their date of birth we can make sure 90<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> birthday cards are sent!!**