

Newsletter February 2026

AFIA HOLIDAYS



There really aren't enough words to say to you but we are so grateful for everything you have done for us. After having such a bad time, this break was really needed, just getting us away from the area was huge. We made the best memories together. The children had the opportunity to just be children again without the worries of everyday life, for me seeing them laughing again really has made me feel complete again. Thank you so much for doing this for us, your kindness will be forever remembered.



All Saints Church St Ives who received a grant from the Susan Baker Memorial Fund

Dear Jean, at last we have our wonderful display units and we have been using them for about a month so they are looking really good.

Sorry that it has taken so long but worthwhile to get such a great result.

Thank you so much to Ely M U for the generous grant which is much appreciated. *Peter Smith*



On December 11th, a group of us from **St George's Mothers' Union, Littleport** held a Wave of Prayer service in our church hall. We all very much appreciate the person/people who put together the materials for this each year as it is always so well done and easy to follow.

After our service we spent time together talking and enjoying tea and mince pies.

Best wishes *Julieanne*



COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEOS. We have three new YouTube video links to share with you for Thursday Prayer.

Debbie Tye

NOVEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER: "Refuges" – Led by Linda Swain. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-P_I-zeZk

DECEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER: "Patience" – Led by Deirdre Milner. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4J43UaWVf0>

JANUARY THURSDAY PRAYER: "150 years of Mothers' Union: Celebrations – JOIN US and JOIN IN" – Led by Jean Webb. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_CEu1d9wTY



A photo taken at Balsham's get together on 12th December to pray for our link dioceses.

The lady in the photo is Jenny Richards our hostess

Lent Lunches in Ely

Ely Cathedral branch will be serving a frugal lunch on four Fridays during Lent, in the Cathedral Centre following the 12.10 Eucharist service in St Catherine's Chapel. The dates are Fridays February 20th and 27th, March 13th and 20th. All profits will go to AFIA Payment by donation at the lunch. (Please note 12.10 Eucharist takes place every Friday during Lent).

If you've not been to a communion service in the cathedral before - come and join us this year - and enjoy lunch and MU fellowship.

Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom

10.30am on 19th February

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=d=VDTrciGq12BVz8IuyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>
Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127



Our Somersham MU group (MiniMUM) has been quite busy!

1. We had a tree (together with 35 others) in the church Christmas Tree Festival last weekend. I have attached photos.
2. I saw on the national MU website an idea for a 'Blue Christmas' service for those who were not looking forward to Christmas.

I expanded that idea to include any who wanted to be quiet to reflect before all the busyness etc got too much. So our December meeting was a quiet time of music, readings and lighting candles - open to any who wished to come. About 20 did. It was also an opportunity to pray for our linked Dioceses in this Wave of Prayer week.

3. I have 3 brightly coloured blankets and some selection boxes of chocolates ready.
4. We have collected £150 for supermarket vouchers for those in Refuges.

Every blessing Val



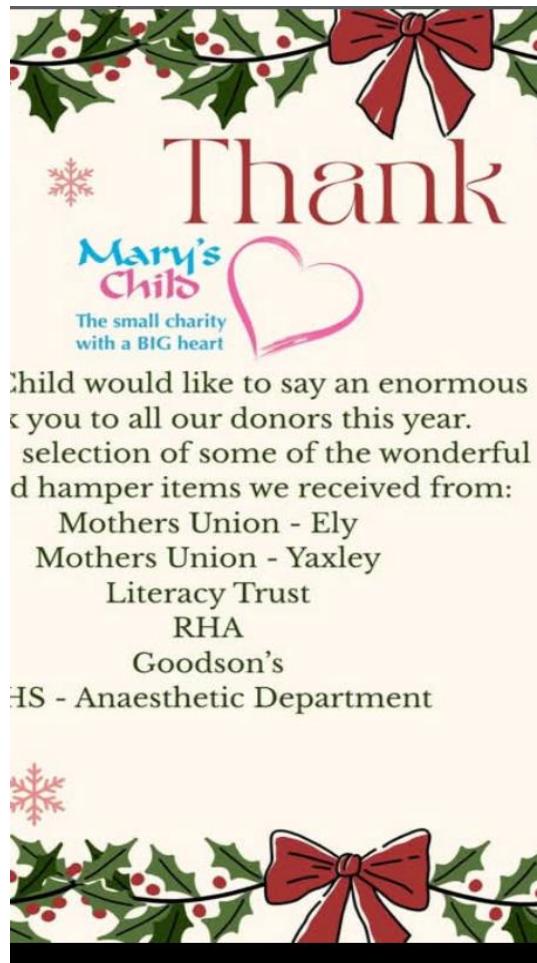


St Andrews Church in Stapleford held a Christmas Tree Festival from the 4-6 December for the Stapleford Warden Scheme. The Branch took part by decorating a tree with blue and white, the colours of the Mothers' Union. There were about 30 trees on display and it was a splendid sight in the church.
Hilary Street

Advance Notice

A Deanery Lady Day Service will take place at St. Mary's Church, Ely during the afternoon of Friday 27th March.

Spring Diocesan Day and AGM will take place on Wednesday 15th April at St John's Waterbeach 10am – 2pm.



Mary's Child would like to say an enormous thank you to all our donors this year. A selection of some of the wonderful hamper items we received from:

Mothers Union - Ely
Mothers Union - Yaxley
Literacy Trust
RHA
Goodson's
HS - Anaesthetic Department

PUTTING OUR FAITH INTO ACTION

Please would branches that deliver items directly to those in need (care home / food bank/ hostel etc) rather than passing them on to Maureen or bringing items to diocesan meetings, please keep a record of how many items you deliver? This is so that I can let Mary Sumner House know just what a wonderful amount is given in Ely Diocese to those who need our support.. If you know how many items were given last year, or even just at Christmas, please do let me know at jmw35n@gmail.com. Many thanks.

Jean Webb Vice President

Mid- Cambs. Refuge. Liz Elson, our contact for the Refuge asks for donations of towels (new or good condition) and kitchen items . If you can help, they can be passed on through diocesan trustees, or contact Liz directly on elsonj046@gmail.com

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

WORLD WIDE LINKS

During our Wave of Prayer in December we prayed for our link Dioceses in Zambia, Rwanda Nigeria and India. The information on Nigeria and India included their position on the Open Doors watch list of persecuted Christians. The 2026 list has now been published. Nigeria remains at 7th on the list, but with a slight increase in the persecution score. India has fallen by one place from 11th to 12th, but the gravity of persecution remains the same. We are relieved , considering the news that we see on the television and in the press, that Nigeria has not risen any higher and give thanks that India is lower on the list. *Irene Porter*

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (21st January 2026)

So, here we are, in a new year, Christmas done and the world seemingly in a more perilous state than it has been for a long time. Many things which we thought we understood are, we are finding, not as we thought in subjects ranging from world peace (or lack of) to the effects of the internet (specifically social media) on our health and society cohesion. There is plenty to worry us with so much uncertainty in our lives, and it is the uncertainty itself which is so often the cause of worry, but we have some certainties with which to counter it.

As Christians we know that our time on earth is just an interlude after which we will return to be with our Father, in whom we trust. However first we must negotiate the difficulties we endure here on earth, keeping our faith and helping others to come to God. Given our relatively comfortable lives, largely free from direct threats to our safety when compared to the conditions in which many live, including many of our members around the world, that should be fairly easy. But we all know it isn't, and that is often because we allow doubts and worries to take control of our thoughts and, in the process, omit to place our trust in God.

As my daughter recently reminded me, my wise mother-in-law used to say that there is a purpose behind everything that happens; we may not understand what that purpose is, but God does. This is another way of expressing the encouragement often given to not worry about things over which we have no control – we should accept it and place ourselves in God's hands. After all, whatever He has planned for us will come to pass, whatever we do and however much we worry. In Matthew 6:27 Jesus says "Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" and in Matthew 6:34 He says "therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself."

One of my favourite worship songs (I have a great many!) includes the lines "I'm trying so hard, To stop trying so hard, Just let you be who you are, Lord, who you are in me". The more I hear those words the deeper their meaning to me: this is what Jesus calls us to do, to place ourselves in God's hands, let Him do with us as He will. In return He takes our worries and tends to our needs as a good father does. Let us therefore try.

On behalf of the March Deanery Mothers' Union Branch I would like to invite your Branch to a 150th Anniversary Garden Party on Tuesday, 16 June 2026 at 2:30 in St. Peter's March Church Hall.

We thought it would be nice to get all the Branches in the North of the Diocese together. There will be more details nearer the time but we thought we would let you know so it can get in diaries.

Sue Claydon for March Deanery MU

Praying our Faith

Christine Holt has been a trustee and task group leader for Praying our Faith for the last 4 years. She has decided that now is the time to pass on the baton to someone else. Our thanks go to Christine for all she has done including organising Thursday Prayer, Quiet Days and the 16 Days of Activism gathering. No small task! Our best wishes go to her as she enjoys more of a back seat, although still a member of the MU.

We welcome Christine Mitchell who will be taking over some of the roles and is already an Ely MU trustee. She has two questions to help her organise Quiet Days.

1. Have you any suggestions for venues that could be used for a Quiet Day? This could be a church or church hall or another suitable place (we would pay the normal fee). Times could be arranged accordingly (am, pm, or across the lunch hour)

2. Would you be interested in attending a quiet day?

Please e-mail Christine on cbm.scb@btinternet.com using 'Quiet Days' in the subject heading in order to reply.

Trumpington Branch

St Mary and St Michael, Trumpington Cambridge had a prayer tree and leaflets in church for the UN 's16 days of activism against gender violence from 25th November to 10th December.

The branch also took part in Trumpington Church annual Christmas Tree Festival weekend 13th-14th December with a MU tree with the theme of "Our Church". Hanging on the tree are, from the top, the vicar, choir, churchwardens and members of the congregation.



The next two pages of this newsletter repeats information you also received in December.

Two articles are about items connected to our 150th celebration and one about help needed at synod meetings.

In addition, a poster about our 150th Anniversary Picture and Prose Anthology will be sent at the same time as this newsletter.

MU Pictures and Prose Anthology for 150th Anniversary.

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

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

For the Photos: They can be anything that represents Mothers' Union activities: e.g. meetings with speakers, afternoon teas, outings/events, services, knitting or sewing for MU projects. If taking pictures of people please ensure you have their permission. Ideally photos should be taken during 2026 (with the exception of December 2025 Christmas photos).

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

The closing date for entries is Monday 31st August 2026, which gives plenty of time to gather photos and other ideas for inclusion. Up to 5 entries can be submitted across both categories. Together let's create a great record of our 150th Anniversary!

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

The leaflet containing all the information is being sent out at the same time as this newsletter. It can also be used as a poster on your noticeboard.

MU Serving Refreshments at Ely Diocesan Synod Meetings.

This year a few of us have been serving refreshments at the Diocesan Synod Meetings, which now take place in St Mary's Church Ely. Coffee, tea and biscuits are served, and we usually have MU info on display. It would be lovely if we could expand our team to serve in this ministry.

The dates for 2026 are:

Saturday 14 March: 9am-1pm.

Thursday 18 June: 6.45pm-9pm.

Saturday 10 October: 9am-1pm.



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

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

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

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

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

Dear members

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

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

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

Please send them to this address;

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

No later than Friday 27th March 2026.

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

Best Wishes.

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