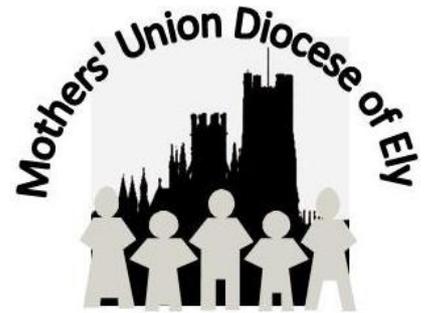




NEWSLETTER

MARCH

2026



Deanery Lady Day Service

in St Mary's Church, Ely

Friday 27th March

Bring your own lunch from 12.30pm

Service at 2.00pm

followed by

Tea and cake celebration with Bishop Dagmar

Diocesan Members, and members from other Deaneries, are most welcome to join in this gathering.

A lovely opportunity to chat with members of other branches and share how we are getting along in our own branch.

Join us and Join in with celebrating 150 years since Mary Summer started, what has become, this worldwide organisation



WORLDWIDE NEWS

Irene Porter, Worldwide Officer

The Chelston Anglican Church of the Resurrection, in the Diocese of Lusaka in Zambia, held a Commitment Sunday on February 1st. Mothers' Union members had a stall and also a display of their uniforms, which you can see in the photos. If you go to the Chelston Anglican parish Facebook page you will see many more photos of the stall along with photos of other groups in the parish who are doing God's work.



Thank you

I am writing on behalf of Refuge to offer our most sincere thanks for your generous donation of gift vouchers for all our families staying in our refuge this Christmas it was truly heart-warming to see how your donations brought happy tears to many of our ladies who were overwhelmed with the kindness shown.

Your generosity has brought such joy and our ladies are truly appreciative to know they are valued and supported by such a caring community.

Your kindness helps us to continue supporting women and children who have fled domestic abuse, and your donation truly means the world to us.

On behalf of the Mid-Cambridgeshire team, thank you once again, and we wish you all a very happy new year.

From a mum:



*When***** was opening her gifts she was so excited. That was the best moment of Christmas. Thank you so much for bringing happiness to my daughter's face. Thank you for making my Christmas special.*

The gift I got made me emotional and special and I loved everything I got. Thank you.



The 150 Fund Challenge

How are your plans going? Has anyone made their virtual £15 into £150 yet?

Our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow, is running 10k in 15 destinations around the world, to achieve 150 k and being sponsored as she goes. Her 3rd run was in London recently. What a wonderful example.

Are you making any items to sell? Marmalade or potted-up plants or a quiz sheet for instance? Would you like to bring them along to the **Spring Diocesan Meeting?** (April 15th at Waterbeach) Just let us know so that we have table space. Good Luck with your plans, and let us know so that others can support you, and don't forget to invite the wider community.

150th Anniversary Picnic (Garden Party), Bishop of Ely's Garden: This has been booked for Saturday 13 June at 3pm. Musical entertainment from John & Mandy Wyatt. Put this date in your diaries - more details to come next month.

Remember we are collecting material for a **Diocesan Anthology to celebrate 150 years of MU.** This can be photos of what we do, a sentence or two of something special that happened, a poem - in fact, anything! Let Hazel or me know if you have something.

Reach out your hands across the world.

Wisbech and North Nene branch 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. Send to **Mrs. Wendy Smith, 24, Quaker Lane, WISBECH, CAMBS. PE13 2JQ. No later than Friday 27th March 2026.**

Clusters and branches are free to arrange their own celebrations for 150th but we suggest some food, a time for fellowship and worshipping together. These events could also be used as a good way to invite prospective new members to consider joining us, and also for fundraising.

The suggested "Cluster Gatherings" are in the Granta Deanery; Huntingdon Deanery; March & Yaxley Deaneries; Ely & Fordham and Quy Deaneries and in Cambridge. Let me know what you have planned so that it can be advertised in the newsletter.

Special Diocesan service booked for Friday 7th August at 2 pm, in Ely Cathedral.

A REFLECTION

Philip Baker (27th February 2026)

Lent - a time for reflection, repentance and considering our relationship with God and each other. This is also the time of year when the role of women come to mind: Mothering Sunday – celebrating the role of mothers, Lady Day – celebrating the Anunciation.

Women played crucial roles in Jesus’ ministry, and He showed by His example that women have a vital role in our lives even today, beyond being mothers. The Samaritan woman at Jacobs Well is a pivotal figure in John 4, when she holds the longest recorded personal conversation with Jesus. Breaking taboos of every kind, cultural, gender and religious, Jesus uses her to become an evangelist to her town. In so doing, she became the first person to whom He directly reveals His identity. And she accepted His word, abandons her old, sinful life, and tells her community about Jesus.

When Jesus rose from the dead in fulfilment of the scriptures who did He trust with this monumental item of news? – His women followers. All the Gospels tell the same story; women were not just bystanders but the trusted first witnesses and messengers of the Good News. This is significant as at that time women were rarely trusted to testify in court, yet here, once again, Jesus flew in the face of norms and used women, specifically Mary Magdalene, to go and tell the male disciples what they had seen. I have read that Mary is known by some as the “Apostle to the Apostles”. While most male disciples hid during these bad times, the women remained present at the Cross, witnessed the burial and were the first to return to the tomb. True discipleship.

What do we gather from this? I chose these examples because they are like bookends to Jesus’ Ministry. Surely, they show the special place that women occupied in the mind of Jesus; that He considered women as far more than bystanders to these events and that women have equal spiritual status with men and an equal mandate to share the gospel. Most of all, to me they show that He trusted women with the most important missions His ministry demanded and contrary to expectations, the communities around them accepted them.

I suggest that it is not possible to exaggerate the importance of women in ministry then, or now. These were everyday tasks, not powerful leadership positions, and this is what we all, men and women, are called to do (and what members of the Mothers’ Union act out daily) – like the Samaritan woman or Mary Magdalene, who knows where any one of our actions undertaken in faith will ultimately lead?

Philip Baker (27th February 2026)

WHITWORTH HOUSE

The House has been most grateful for the welcome bags of toiletries we have provided but their greater need is for Home Starter kits. As the Manager wrote in her report to the AGM of Whitworth Trust last November: what the residents struggle with and do not always prioritise, are cleaning products and home items that prevent their rooms becoming messy and unclean. This then leads to issues with their terms and conditions here and will likely be an issue going forward in their tenancies when they move on.”

I was able to take some in December and have just spent the money raised from “The Diary of an Intrepid Cyclist” published last year to get together another 4. The kit contains a roll top bin, washing up bowl, dustpan and brush, 2 tea towels, washing up liquid, cream cleaner, pk of 10 all purpose cloths, roll of 20 tie handle bin liners 50l, microfibre cloths, pk 10 sponge scourers, antibac all-purpose spray.



OUR NEW DIOCESAN BISHOP

It was announced on 27 January 2026 that the Right Reverend Sarah Clark, Acting Bishop of Durham and Suffragan Bishop of Jarrow in the Diocese of Durham, has been nominated as the next Bishop of Ely. Bishop Sarah introduces herself to the Diocese in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rYhj6bk8FU>.

It is anticipated that Bishop Sarah will be welcomed and enthroned at Ely Cathedral in the early summer.

BISHOP DAGMAR

The Right Reverend Dr Dagmar Winter was elected on 14 February 2026, as the new Bishop of Edinburgh. She will take up her new post later in the year. Bishop Dagmar becomes the Bishop-Elect of Edinburgh following the retirement in August 2025 of the Rt Rev Dr John Armes who served as Bishop of Edinburgh for 13 years. More info here: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/new-bishop-elected-for-edinburgh/>

COMMUNICATION NEWS – NEW YouTube VIDEO. Debbie Tye

We have a new YouTube video link to share with you for **FEBRUARY THURSDAY PRAYER: “Lent”** – Led by Christine Mitchell (prepared by Chris Holt). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwjFQcjp6dw>

Thursday Lunchtime Concerts, Ely Cathedral at 1pm (note earlier start time):

If you are coming to any of our **Thursday Prayer Services**, there are some Lunchtime Concerts this term and next which coincide with our dates:

19 March - Ely College; 16 April - Emilija Karaliute; 21 May - Swathmore College Garnet Singers, PA; 4 June - Salisbury Presbyterian Church Choir; 16 July - Dominic Beeton.

The Concert Series is running from March, and a full list can be found on the Cathedral website: <https://www.elycathedral.org/music/concerts-and-recitals/lunchtime-recitals>

MOTHERING SUNDAY: 15th March

This year’s Mothers’ Union “Make a Mother’s Day” Appeal has as its focus “The Gift of Belonging”, helping families to flourish. Donations from as little as £15 can be made to support our projects around the world with ethical gifts, which can help families move from isolation and rejection into communities of care and hope. Further info on the website and details of how you can donate online as well:

<https://www.mothersunion.org/appeal/make-a-mothers-day-2026/>

Ely Baby Bank were very pleased with the recent knitted blankets they received and would very much like more.

Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom

10.30am on 19th March

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628 Passcode 080127

Ely Diocesan MU contacts

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

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A prayer for Mothering Sunday



Loving God,
Thank you for mothers and children
and for all the joy of family life.
Be with those who are grieving
because they have no mother;
Be close to those who are struggling
because they have no children;
Be near to those who are sad
because they are far apart from those they
love.
Let your love be present in every home,
And help your church to have eyes to see
and ears to hear the needs of all who come.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

