



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!

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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 (15th May 2021)

The prayer for Tuesday 11th 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?

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

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

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 25th 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.

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 or ring Hazel or Ros (details on the front page) and they will pass on your request for information.