

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2021

All members, family and friends are
invited to our

COMMISSIONING SERVICE

Saturday October 23rd

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 9TH/10TH 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 27th 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



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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

21st 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 (30th 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.