



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

November

Newsletter 2023

ELY DIOCESAN AUTUMN MEETING



There is more about what the MU stands for, many resources, and the campaigns on the MU website.

We heard of some of the work of the Task Groups: Faith in Action has been able to send 12 families on an AFIA holiday this year, often their first break for years and sometimes ever; Praying our Faith producing Prayer diaries and organising Quiet Days one of which our Chaplain Paula will lead next spring; Communications – maintaining the flow of information in a variety of ways as well as organising events for members who do not have a local Branch.

We also heard from Canon Matthew Bradbury about Modern Slavery. Matthew delivered a fascinating outline of the unbelievable things going on under our eyes – evil in plain sight – and he also gave an insight into the history of slavery.

A REFLECTION for NOVEMBER

Philip Baker

When I was young, admittedly some time ago now, there used to be a saying – “there’s none so queer as folk” – often said with a rolling of the eyes. I expect you remember it too and it referred to the strange propensity for people to do the most peculiar and unexpected things. One of my grandchildren reminded me that nothing much changes except the language when she recently used the phrase “some people are weird” in exactly the same context (and with the rolling of the eyes).

But however we express it, the fact remains that people sometimes really are difficult to fathom. I am going to apply this thought to our belief in God, God the Creator and Maker of everything in heaven and on earth, including us. God offers us a complete explanation for everything. He made it and it works, what else do we need to know? If we knew everything, we would be God and that is clearly very unlikely! And suppose that somehow we did know everything, what would we do with that knowledge? – knowing humanity I suspect we would find a way of spoiling it! No, better the way it is.

So we have an explanation for how the world came to be and how it was populated by God for everyone to believe, but what do some do instead? They come up with ever more fanciful ideas which are statistically less likely than the simple one they have rejected! Let us take as an example the Big Bang theory of how the universe formed. This theory is very simple and stood for some time. The theory was that we are in a cycle which started in the infinite past, with all the matter in the universe existing on a pin head and exploding. As it all expanded planets formed, life appeared from the chemical sludge and developed to us. At some point in the future the universe will start to contract until all matter again sits on a pin head. And, as the knitting patterns say, Repeat. Into the infinite future. However, this does not explain where the matter initially came from, what made it go bang, in what space does it exist and, the big one, why? Sadly for them, scientists now believe that there is not enough matter in the universe to make the cycle repeat, so now they think the last “big bang” was the first and last, which somewhat upsets the theory as it leads to the question of what was there before the big bang, where did all this matter suddenly come from and why was it so tightly compressed? And yet, belief in God solves all that, giving us both an explanation and a reason.

Why do people have such trouble with the obvious? Why are they so weird? Over the centuries people have believed in gods being in almost anything imaginable, from cows to the moon. There are programmes on television about visitors from space (yes, seriously, people have seen them and their flying machines) and about ghostly appearances and apparitions and restless spirits. But if you believe in any of these things, you have to obliterate the God which we believe is behind everything and who is the only one among all the other contenders who lays claim to love us as His own, to offer succour to us when we are needy and to give us eternal life with Him, provided we keep to His way. Why would people not believe in that in preference to anything else? Anyway, none of these alternatives can seriously be considered to have created the universe! Something like a cow, perhaps?

As with most things, whilst we can conjure up all sorts of complex theories, the simple solution is best: God created all things and like all creations there will have been a purpose. We do not need to understand that purpose, indeed we probably would not be able to. Let us just accept the simple truth of God and pray that all peoples will find Him. What a wonderful world that would be!

**THURSDAY PRAYER in the Cathedral and on Zoom
10.30am on November 23rd**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

**Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union
Charity no. 251394**

<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>
Ros 01223 861846 roswright1@gmail.com
Hazel 01638 743897 hwill66@icloud.com



In photos of Mothers' Union members in African countries they are usually wearing their blue and white uniforms. While the three members from Yaxley were in Rwanda in July, they decided to bring me a gift of Mothers' Union fabric. I have now made this into a skirt, some of you will have seen it at the October meeting in Waterbeach. *Irene*



YAXLEY OCTOBER MEETING

Ros Wright brought her display of crosses and talked on "Christ's Cross in the World" This was a very enjoyable meeting with some very profound thoughts on some of the crosses from our members.

WORLDWIDE

Shyogwe Diocese in Rwanda now has a new Mothers' Union coordinator. Thank you to Rev Claudine Mukawena, who will continue in her parish as Pastor and welcome to Clementine Dushimimana, who has taken over as the new Mothers' Union worker for Shyogwe Diocese.

Granta Deanery Advent Service

10.30am Tuesday 5 December 2023

St Mary's, Sawston

All Welcome



The **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence** begins on 25th November, and as usual there will be displays in Ely Cathedral, this time in the South Transept. The Faith In Action display will highlight how we in Ely Diocese support the 3 Refuges and other victims of domestic abuse. My hope is that the displays will encourage others to **Rise Up Against Domestic Abuse**, with us, our theme for this year.

November 25th will also be the day that Mothers' Union members and supporters meet together at Ely Cathedral at 12.15pm for a silent vigil. This will be followed by a minute's silence outside the main door at 1.03pm to help raise awareness of the fact that 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Do come to join us if you can or hold a silence and prayers in your own branch.

We are now working with Property Angels (to be known as Angel Foundation UK, when granted charity status). They work to provide basic items for setting up a new home for abuse victims. They need beds – double and single, preferably divans, settees, coffee and bedside tables, chest of drawers, washing machines, fridge-freezers and “hoovers”. Please contact me if you have anything to give – they can collect.

Although we support the Refuges 365 days a year, it is very apt that we make a special effort to support with Gift Vouchers for Christmas, within the 16 Days Campaign. Is your branch making a special effort for this? If not, please consider doing so. Details in last month's newsletter.

Thank you for all the bags of goodies given to me at the Diocesan Meeting. Lovely knitting, most has now been delivered.

Your branch leader will have my contact details.

BANNER FESTIVAL 2024

The Ely MU Diocese will be staging a Festival of Banners (MU of course) in Ely Cathedral 1st – 14th August in the Lady Chapel. This would need the support of branches bringing banners to display and maybe other items. Please decide as a branch whether you would like to take part.

Forms asking for information will be sent out to branches in January.

It is also proposed to hold a Mary Sumner Day Service in the Cathedral on Friday 9th August at 11.30am. It is possible that members can eat packed lunches in the Lady Chapel and drinks will be available.

WAVE OF PRAYER DATES

The dates for Ely Diocese are **December 10th – 12th**. Prayers will be available later this month for use by branches, diocese or individuals to remember our link diocese of Lusaka, Shyogwe, Sokoto, Ikka and Karimnagar.