

February - March 2026

**Mothers' UNION**

**Diocese of  
Bath & Wells**



Lighting the way  
for generations  
to come

**Themes for Mothers' Union in 2026**

Central Theme: **Join us: Join in.**

**Lighting the way for Generations to come**

Bath&Wells Theme: **Listen to the Heartbeat**



***Quiet Day***

The Holy Spirit's Quiet Gifts  
*With Revd. Louise - our Chaplain*

**The Angel**

**Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>**

Langport, TA10 9PQ

10am - 3.30pm

Cost - £10

Free parking at the rear of Town carpark:

Lift available to first floor rooms

Tea, Coffee, Biscuits, Cup-a-Soup available Bring your own Lunch

**Book your Place with Madeline - 07967961751**

**Looking for Gay's report about her trip to India to meet our Link Diocese - Vellore? Find it on Page 11.**

**Mothers Union Prayers @ Wells Cathedral  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Central Theme:**

Lighting the way for  
generations to come

**This Month's Theme:**

Global Invitation to Prayer and Action



**Thank You** all for your Prayers & MU Work. Without you, we wouldn't be as strong in **Demonstrating God's Love in Action**. To continue in God's Strength, we need some members to step up. Look out for adverts for an **Administrator**, an **Editor** for the Newsletter & a **Diocesan President**. If you are interested, or know of someone who could do one of these roles, contact Ruth Cook: 01823 973787 or [ruth.mucttee@yahoo.com](mailto:ruth.mucttee@yahoo.com)

## **What we -as Mothers' Union Members- Do**

*We are continue to record our way through identifying how we, MU Bath & Wells members, honour our Mothers' Union Promises in working and demonstrating our Vision and achieving our 5 Objectives. In this Issue we will look deeper in to the objective in which we promise:-*

### **To help those whose Family Life has met with Adversity**

Our AFIA [Away From It All] Project is Up and Running. Sally our Treasurer, has money allocated to provide as soon as Marlene & Moira have arranged to provide

Breaks for People who have Met with Adversity.

It is now over to you, MU Members, Its up to You to spread the word. We can help:



Someone who needs help to arrange a visit to see a sick friend; or is it someone who would benefit from a Pampering while having a Respite break; or would like to treat their family to a Day Out



One of our MU branches helped a Mother and Toddler group to arrange a Day Out.



Can you Help Spread The Word?

[afia@mubathandwells.org](mailto:afia@mubathandwells.org)

I pray that you all (especially the Diocesan Members) have enjoyed receiving a variety of items by post; Christmas cards, your own Wave of Prayer Service and now a 150<sup>th</sup> celebration Bookmark with this Newsletter.

I trust you found the Wave of Prayer Service helped to make you that feel part of this World-Wide Christian Organisation, especially as Gay may have been part of the Service at the same time! If you can, use the internet look at some pictures of the Wave of Prayers held around the diocese on our Facebook page - MUBathWells.



You will be aware that our new Bishop of Taunton Fiona Gibson, was Welcomed on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>. I was delighted to see that a beautifully cleaned MU banner led her into the Cathedral. Thank you Hamish for carrying it for us. My Thanks too to Jason the photographer, for sending us the pictures, now recorded in our Facebook page.



I was able to personally welcome Fiona on Monday on behalf of you all when we



met in Flourish House. Discussion occurred regarding one of her responsibilities being "*Transforming Communities*" that we, the Mothers' Union was actively helping her in her work.

The front page of the central MU website states we are:

***Transforming lives through Faith, Community and Action***

*We make a meaningful difference in the lives of millions world-wide through our unique, **faith-based & community-led** approach to tackling poverty, injustice and violence.*

*We understand that these challenges are deeply interconnected and as such, our response is holistic, while confronting the systemic causes and consequences of marginalisation.*

Madeline Hellier DP





## Sharing thoughts on Holy Week.

Holy Week starts with **Palm Sunday**. Do you have any memories? Special likes/dislikes?

Have you a story about a specific Palm Sunday with a donkey? One special memory for me, not with any donkeys occurred in Brecon Cathedral about 20 years ago. My son and his young children were with me. I had envisaged a service with celebratory hymns & palm-waving to occupy the grand-kids. Not a bit of it! On reaching the time to hear the Gospel being read we discovered that the congregation were to stand while that very long Gospel passage was to be sung in a dialogue format, with parts split between different choir sections representing the individual characters, crowds and narrator. If it had just been Nick and I, there wouldn't have been a problem but with an 8 and a 6 year old, my heart sank. However, I needn't have worried: either St. Cecilia, *patron saint of music* or St Joseph (or both) took over. From where we sat, we could see that alongside us in



the north aisle (but with a dividing barrier) there was a children's area. Nick trusted the children to quietly take themselves down the central aisle, round and then up to quietly entertain themselves, but could see us, while we could worship through the music.



{If you've not been present at a Palm Sunday Service where this happens, here is a link to a similar video.

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[https://youtu.be/TqIFehwuv6Y?si=ICKVeiIkZvND\\_ly](https://youtu.be/TqIFehwuv6Y?si=ICKVeiIkZvND_ly)

The main service on **Holy Tuesday** takes place at the Cathedrals. If attending a routine Cathedral service makes you think that there are a lot of dog collars around, take an opportunity to attend a Chrism Mass. This is when you really see almost everyone wearing a dog collar with



many different styles, as nearly all the diocesan clergy attend with their special Holy Oil Stock. This will be filled with Blessed Holy Oil in readiness for use at Baptisms or when Anointing the Sick. Many of the priests will be wearing cassocks and Cottas; make sure you admire the lace edgings!

*Cottas are a lot easier to iron than Surplices!*

**Maundy Thursday** has a few different ways for us to worship and reflect in Holy Week. The most prominent one is the service where the Monarch hands out a few velvet bags of Maundy Money. We have had a couple of MU members be chosen to receive Maundy Money.

Then there is a choice of formal Eucharistic services or more reflective gatherings; both may offer to wash feet in memory of Jesus washing the disciples feet. To me,

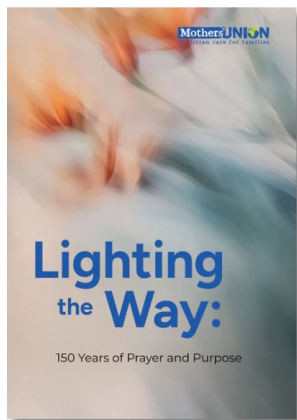
there is a big difference between what and the why Jesus performed a practical necessity by waiting on his disciples & how it is performed in big churches with the senior cleric having assistants waiting with fresh warm water and clean towels and those waiting to have one foot symbolically washed. But discussions with those who have participated and found it very moving, reveal that I may be missing out on something special.

Finally, some churches arrange an evening meal similar to the original Passover meal which leads into prayers as occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Some churches continue straight into holding an overnight vigil, remembering how Jesus asked his disciples to pray with him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Following these services, the Altar is stripped left bare, emphasizing the darkness of the occasion.



These days, **Good Friday** means Hot Cross Buns but as a child I don't remember them being so important. As a family we would travel into the Devon countryside, hopefully for walks and picnics. Whatever the weather, we would find a country church where we quietly enter and have a time of personal reflection (and explorations for my brother and I) These church visits would need careful timing as some churches would have services from 12noon to 3pm. Many churches still continue this tradition. Some arrange a single walk for all local denominations, being led by a simple wooden cross. A friend told me after leading the procession, that he was surprised how emotional he found it. These walks will finish with Hot Cross Buns!



**Lighting the Way** is a beautiful new collection of 150 heartfelt prayers, gathered from Mothers' Union members across the globe, alongside bishops and distinguished voices from the UK and overseas.

Shaped around 15 key themes, it reflects the vital work and projects of Mothers' Union today, offering comfort, inspiration, and encouragement in these changing times.

With contributions from high-profile personalities, including beloved TV presenter Alison Hammond, this unique prayer book speaks to the heart of faith, family, and community.

A must-have companion for prayer and reflection.

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Chris Mahony has several of these (£5.99) if you would like to read these prayers as part of your support for *Bishop Michael's 2026 - A Year of Prayer* or the *Church of England's Lenten challenge - Draw Near*.

Chris - 01275 857724 or [chris@woodview.org](mailto:chris@woodview.org)

## Mothers Union Calendar 2026

<b>MARCH</b>	
Thurs 5 <sup>th</sup>	DC Committee 10.30am
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Quiet Day – The Angel. Langport
Thurs 19 <sup>th</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
<b>APRIL</b>	
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Good Friday
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Day
Thurs 16 <sup>th</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
Thurs 23 <sup>rd</sup>	DC Committee 10.30am
<b>MAY</b>	
Thurs 21 <sup>st</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup>	Thy Kingdom Come 14 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup>
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Pentecost
<b>JUNE</b>	
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Celebration of Lay Ministries
Wed 10 <sup>th</sup> 11 <sup>th</sup>	150 <sup>th</sup> Celebrations London
Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Annual Meeting Flourish House 10am–3pm</b>
<b>JULY</b>	
Thurs 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>DC Committee 10.30am</b>
Thurs 16 <sup>th</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
<b>AUGUST</b>	
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Mary Sumner Day
Mon 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Diocesan 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration Event Flourish House –</b>
Thurs 20 <sup>th</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Information Day</b>
Sat 12 <sup>th</sup>	Celebration 150 <sup>th</sup> Service in the Cathedral Evensong 5.15pm
Thurs 17 <sup>th</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
Thurs 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DC Committee 1pm</b>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	
Mon 12 <sup>th</sup> 13 <sup>th</sup>	MU Retreat with Quiet Day option
Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Gathering in Wells Museum and Cathedral Prayers
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	
Thurs 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DC Committee 10.30am</b>
Thurs 19 <sup>th</sup>	Cathedral Prayers
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Advent Sunday
<b>DECEMBER</b>	
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Cathedral Prayers

## MU Vacancies

### Dear Friends

We have several key roles to fill in the Diocese and I would encourage you to think and pray about who is being called to these positions.

**Diocesan President** – the job description for this has been sent out already but I would like to emphasise that this role is open to all members – it is not restricted to committee members or branch leaders. We are looking for someone with a heart for MU and is willing to share our vision with members and others alike. Enthusiasm is key!

**Newsletter Editor** – the Diocesan Newsletter provides a lot of useful information and other articles primarily for Diocesan members but others by email on request. We would like someone who can compile and create this up to six times a year and is a role that could be done from home.

**Faith Lead** – Revd Julie Sims has described this role elsewhere in this newsletter but this is an important position working with our Chaplain, Revd Louise Bale.

**Administrator** – this is a paid role based at Flourish House in Wells. The full job description will shortly be on our MU website and the Bath & Wells Website.

**Diocesan Treasurer** – Sally Bult has been an excellent Treasurer for six years and her term of office is expiring. The requirements for this role will change when the SW Cluster is operational but we will still need someone with a love of figures and accounts.

The Diocesan President, Treasurer and the Administrator will need to attend Diocesan Committee Meetings.

If you are interested in any of these roles, please contact Ruth Cook, Chair of the Diocesan Committee on 01823 973787 or [ruth.mucttee@yahoo.com](mailto:ruth.mucttee@yahoo.com)



## Time to Learn to Pray

*Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath & Wells*

'Lord, teach us to pray.'

In Luke's Gospel it's these words, spoken by the disciples, that cause Jesus to give them the Lord's Prayer Luke 11:1-4



Jesus says to his friends 'When you pray say:

Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

Give us each our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

Many of us think that we should be able to pray automatically. And that if we can't, it's either because 'it's not our thing' or because we're failing. Yet in Luke's Gospel, the disciples still need to ask Jesus how to pray, even after they've been knocking around with him for ages. So maybe we should give ourselves a break and accept that working out how to pray is not obvious and that we all need to learn.

In 2026, I'm asking all of us across our diocese of Bath and Wells to make the year one of especial focus on prayer. I'm hoping we'll all be able to say the words 'Lord teach us to pray' and together we'll all grow in our experience, understanding, insight and practice.

How can we learn about prayer? We have to make a start. We need to make some mistakes. We need to learn from others. It doesn't happen in the abstract. Prayer is a 'learning by doing thing' where if we stick at it, we grow and change.

How might you learn to pray more this year? There isn't a master plan designed to get everyone on their knees. Most action will happen locally where we can identify what we need, work out who can help us, and then get underway. Some simple resources designed to be helpful are being made available. More importantly, please do talk to your vicar or other church leaders about what might be possible where you are.

Together, let's say these words in the year that is to come: 'Lord, teach us to pray.'





**Mothers' UNION**  
 Christian care for families  
 Diocese of Bath & Wells



# Quiet Day

The Holy Spirit's Quiet Gifts

*With Revd. Louise - our Chaplain*

Where?

**The Angel in Langport**

TA10 9PQ

When?

**Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>**

10am - 3.30pm

Cost - £10



Free parking at the rear of Town carpark

Lift available to first floor rooms

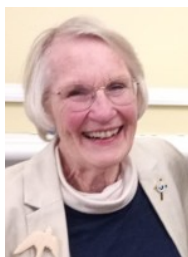
Tea, Coffee, Biscuits, Cup-a-Soup available

Bring your own Lunch

Book your Place with Madeline -

07967961751 - [madelinehellier@mothersunion.org](mailto:madelinehellier@mothersunion.org)

## Gay's visit to Vellore



When I accepted the invitation to travel as a team member with Ely Diocese (Churches Together in Cambridgeshire) to visit Vellore, in Tamil Nadu, South India on behalf of MU Bath & Wells Diocese, to this mutually shared worldwide link, I had no idea of the experience that lay ahead.

Thankfully the Bishop's Advisor on World Mission, Rev Fiona Brampton who, for more than 30 years has developed this ecumenical link, introduced us, first timers, with comprehensive briefings. Our experiences proved every word in them and every report from travellers there, to be accurate!

India is indeed an assault on the senses, it is chaotic and colourful and every-day, morning to night routines are very different from 'home'.

The team's itinerary was committed to sharing and supporting Vellore Diocese' Golden Anniversary celebrations. Mine, thanks to the co-ordination of Joy Hla Gyaw, MU Zonal Trustee, allowed me to include visits to meet Church of South India Women's Fellowship members at its headquarters in the diocese of Bangalore and afterwards Rayalaseema Diocese

At every event we attended we were very enthusiastically welcomed and introduced ('presented') and when my turn came it seemed each bishop was more knowledgeable about the dates and history of Mothers' Union coming to their own diocese than I, which was a real icebreaker if it preceded my talk!



The ministry and mission of the CSI Women's Fellowship to which Mothers' Union is affiliated and to which CSI WF pay a subscription, mirrors that of Mothers' Union. Their officers, especially their President and Secretary are the wife of the Bishop or the Pastor and are often professional, working, women, but who are daily actively involved in working together with church staff. Members fast on Friday; they contribute to services of worship and support the training of Bible Women who take the gospel into village life.

90% of Tamil Nadu's population is Dalit and poor to the extreme. The Church of South India finds support from a





variety of donors to extend and enable its work and ministry in the towns and remote hillside villages to provide education, training and healthcare.

CSI WF members are constructive in the establishment of

community projects. Common in every diocese are the Skill Centres, pre-primary and children's refuge provision whose work is aligned to a national standard or curriculum and is open to all faiths and none (Muslim, Hindu and Christian).

Visiting our link diocese of Vellore has brought to the dry, written word of research, an understanding of what it is to 'stand in the shoes of an Indian woman' which was my aim. However, I think in reality, I have experienced what it is to 'stand in the shoes of a CSI WF member' – but certainly with a very real comprehension of the first.

In 2027 Kathleen Snow will visit India and I am sure she, like I, will feel a joyful love and affinity for the country

Thank you all, members in the branches for your gifts and contributions and the Diocesan Committee for your support which



has created a closer Mothers' Union Worldwide link with the work of Church of South India Women's Fellowship. Gay C.

*Thank You Gay. It sounds an awesome trip.  
Looking forward to the next report! MH*