

## **Central Charity's Monthly Update – March 2026 Edition**

Dear Members,

Welcome to the March edition of your monthly Central Charity Update.

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### **Attachments:**

- Special Easter Message from WWP
- Monthly Reflection
- 150<sup>th</sup> Province & Diocese Activities Form
- £150 Seed Fund Application Form

## 1. New Bishop Ambassador for Mothers' Union Appointed

We are delighted to announce that Bishop Kelly Betteridge, Bishop of Basingstoke, has accepted the invitation to be the new Bishop Ambassador for Mothers' Union.

Bishop Kelly succeeds Bishop Emma Ineson, who acted as Central Chaplain for MU until November of last year.



The title is intended to reflect the role of strengthening relationships between MU and the Church of England, and Bishop Kelly's appointment has been approved by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The Board unanimously approved the appointment, and we are

delighted that Bishop Kelly, who is already an active MU member, has accepted.

The photo was taken at the Bishop Kelly's consecration service in October last year. Also present at the service was Elizabeth Cheruiyot, the new PCDC in Kenya, who served as liturgical deacon and proudly wore her MU headscarf, creating a powerful symbol of connection across the worldwide fellowship. The service was the first at which Archbishop Sarah presided following the announcement of her election. The Bishop of Southampton and the Bishop of Winchester were also present, offering a strong and encouraging witness to women's leadership within the Church.

### **Bishop Kelly commented**

*"My interest in and support of the Mothers' Union was first ignited in the 1990s during two visits to the African continent where I experienced the vibrancy and impact of the MU in Tanzania and Ghana. I welcome the global connectivity that the MU offers and sustains.*

*I've been a local MU member whilst in Truro Diocese and am in the process of transferring my membership to Winchester. I have chosen to be a member largely because I greatly value the radical and transformative work of the MU,*

*its ethos as a grass roots movement and its reach in working globally with and for communities where there is greatest need.”*

Please join us in warmly welcoming Bishop Kelly as she steps into this important role, and in holding her in your prayers as she begins this new chapter of service.

## **2. 150th National Events and Activities and the Global Gathering**

There are a few tickets left for the 150<sup>th</sup> Celebratory Service at St Paul’s Cathedral, 5pm, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026. A glorious celebration of Mothers’ Union. Tickets are now on general release until 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

Join us for the joyous Annual Gathering the following day, 11<sup>th</sup> June, at the Emmanuel Centre next door to Mary Sumner House. Members will celebrate our legacy, showcase our present and shine a light on our future. Tickets are now on general release until 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

### *❖ Annual Gathering Programme:*

**10.30am** - Join Worldwide President (WWP) Kathleen Snow, CEO Bev Jullien, former WWPs and invited guests as they start by **celebrating our history and impact**, followed by live Midday Prayers. After enjoying your packed lunch, and the opportunity to **visit the exhibition in Mary Sumner House**, the afternoon will **showcase grassroots work** with member presented case studies on programme work in Britain & Ireland, including prisons, AFIA, and domestic abuse. An update will follow on our Global Work. The final session will **shine a light on our future** including the importance of safeguarding, and our partnership with the Clewer Initiative on Modern Slavery and our work with the Girls Brigade, focusing on how MU is adapting to serve the needs in today’s society and for the future. The day will finish at **4.30pm**.

Celebratory Service and Annual Gathering tickets can be found here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/event/150/>

### *❖ Global Gathering*

Join us in **Durban, South Africa** for a once-in-a-generation celebration of **150 years of Mothers’ Union** — a movement of faith and action that spans the globe. Tickets on sale from 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

## **30 September – 3 October 2026**

This historic gathering will bring together members from across the world to celebrate our legacy, strengthen our global fellowship, and boldly explore what it means to be the Next Generation Mothers' Union.

Together, we will:

- Flourish in faith for the future,
- Live out our faith by empowering communities, and
- Celebrate our unity as one worldwide family in Christ.

This is more than a conference. It is a celebration of who we are, what we stand for, and how we will light the way for generations to come. More information can be found on our website: <https://www.mothersunion.org/event/worldwide-gathering-2026/>, including an [Information Pack](#)

### **❖ 150th Teddy Bear Picnics**

Have you secured a venue with date and time for your Teddy Bear Picnic? Let us know so our team at Mary Sumner House can support you with publicity and anything else you might need. Remember to check the picnic checklist to help you with the planning. The checklist was shared with the February update and is also available on the \*Resource Hub. If there is anything missing, tell us and we'll update it!

*\*Many of our resources are available on our website [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org). Until we develop our new website further with member-only accessible content, we have a special space just for members - MU's Resource Hub – if you haven't already signed up to access the resources here – click here and register: <https://mothersunionresourcehub.com>*

### **❖ Sunday Takeovers**

Sunday Takeovers are a fantastic way to introduce MU to local churches, raise awareness, and grow the movement. Reach out to your local church, or a nearby one, and see how you can share our mission during a service. Resources will soon be available on our website and the Resource Hub.

Let's make this 150th year the one to remember! Every action, big or small, helps us grow the movement, support families, and celebrate the incredible work of Mothers' Union over the past century and a half.

### 3. Take on a Challenge to celebrate the 150th Anniversary!

How are you getting involved in our mission to grow the movement for generations to come? Every opportunity is a great opportunity to celebrate our 150th anniversary and share the joy of Mothers' Union with others! In this March edition, we want to remind you about the exciting 150th national challenges and ways you can get involved:

**The National Membership Challenge is in full swing.** Let us invite our friends and family to join the movement, one member at a time! The 150<sup>th</sup> membership challenge invites every diocese to welcome new members and help grow our movement of faith, action, and community support for generation to come.

**The National Fundraising Challenge** is the perfect chance to make a difference. Take on a personal challenge to grow the movement just as many are doing. For example.

- **Kathleen Snow**, our Worldwide President (WWP), has begun her 150th Anniversary Challenge, running 10-15 km in 15 dioceses around the world throughout 2026 to support our mission to end injustice, end poverty, and end violence.
- **Deb Lee**, Worldwide Board Trustee for Zone H (York Province), is undertaking a special 150th anniversary challenge: a bike ride across the province. On her ride from York to St Paul's Cathedral, she will be accompanied by Geoff Fellows, a Sheffield member, cycling 350 miles. Deb will carry a prayer capsule that will travel through every diocese in the province. It will contain a Provincial prayer (written by the Provincial Bishop) and a prayer from each diocese, with a short service at each handover point.
- **Maxine Paul**, Diocesan President for Chelmsford diocese, is embarking on an annual fundraising challenge to commemorate our 150th anniversary. Each month, she will visit a different historic site across East London and Essex to lead Midday Prayers. Through this journey, Maxine aims to inspire members, drive growth, and raise vital funds to support the strength and safety of families both locally and worldwide.

If you are taking on a personal challenge to raise funds or awareness for Mothers' Union, please update staff at Mary Sumner House. We will

support you by promoting your activity on social media and all other platforms.

As part of the fundraising challenge, **the £150 Seed Fund application is now open**, and dioceses are invited to submit their application for this seed funding. Please note that **only one application per diocese** is permitted. Dioceses that receive the seed funding are expected to grow it to **£1,500 or more by 31 December 2026**.

If your diocese has not yet registered to participate in the national activities, there is still time to do so. Simply complete the Expression of Interest form using the link: [150th Anniversary – Join us, Join in! challenge](#)

#### **4. Momentum Is Building: Our Membership Challenge Is Already Bearing Fruit!**



#### **Welcoming new members through our Membership Challenge**

that every invitation, every conversation, and every act of encouragement can help grow our movement. Let's keep the momentum going, who might you invite to join next?

Our Membership Challenge only began last month, and we're already celebrating wonderful results. In the Diocese of Sheffield, things are off to a fantastic start, with new members already joining the Mothers' Union family. Jenny and Florence were warmly welcomed and enrolled on 20 January, a joyful sign of the momentum building across the movement!

Stories like this remind us

## 5. A Sacred Conversation on Healing at Synod Gathering



On 11 February, Mothers' Union was delighted to host a General Synod Fringe Event at Mary Sumner House, welcoming **United in Solace and Grace**, Survivors' Voices, and Survivors in Transition to share their vital and inspiring work.

Held in the chapel at Mary Sumner House, a sacred and peaceful space, the event offered Synod members an opportunity to learn more about the development of resources to create safe spaces for survivors of abuse within church communities.

At the heart of the event was **United in Solace and Grace**, a series of reflective church services reaching out to survivors of abuse of all kinds, as well as their families, supporters, and professionals. The service was developed with great care and prayerful attention to ensure that people who attend feel safe, heard, and respected, particularly in spaces that may, for some, have previously felt unsafe.

Partners **Survivors' Voices** and **Survivors in Transition** also shared their mission and the collaborative work they are undertaking to support survivors and advocate for meaningful change within church and society.

Through our [Rise Up campaign](#) that forms part of our wider **National Domestic Abuse Programme** of work in Britain and Ireland, we continue to raise awareness in churches and communities about domestic abuse and gender-based violence, advocating for justice, compassion and practical support.

The gathering at Mary Sumner House was a powerful reminder that the Church must be a place of refuge, healing, and hope. By listening to survivors and creating spaces shaped by their experience, we take meaningful steps toward ensuring that all can worship in safety and dignity.

## 6. Mothers' Union Takes the Spotlight on Songs of Praise – BBC 1

Make sure you watch BBC 1's Songs of Praise on the afternoon of **Mothering Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> March**. It features Mothers' Union! Thank you to Sue Rivers, your Provincial President from Wales, and the Diocese of Liverpool for showcasing some of our important work in communities across the breadth of Britain and Ireland.

Also, you will hear Kathleen Snow and Bev Jullien talking about the history of Mothers' Union in our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year on **UCB1** (United Christians Broadcast) **Radio** station soon.

<https://www.ucb.co.uk/qrlisten#waystolisten>

## 7. Faith Resources Now at Your Fingertips!

We are excited to share some wonderful news! Our Faith Resources have been refreshed and are ready for you to explore. You can now download materials directly from our website, perfect for your personal reflection, family use, or with your local group.

Newly added resources include:

- **Lent Action Calendar** – plan your journey through Lent
- **Lent Psalm Reflections** – daily inspiration for your soul
- **Prayers for Lady Day** – a beautiful way to mark this special day
- **Order of Service for Lady Day** – for church or home
- **Mothering Sunday Order of Service** – celebrate this special day with your loved ones

Head over to the Mothers Union website now and make these resources part of your spiritual journey!

## 8. Faith & National Programmes COIs Are Back!

After a brief pause, we are delighted to share that our **Faith COI** (Community of Interest) and **National Programme COIs** are back and active once again to shape vital areas of our shared life. These key spaces for prayer, reflection, learning, and action are now up and running, and we warmly invite you to

reconnect. We look forward to rich times of discussion, encouragement, and spiritual growth together.

**National Programmes COIs** include AFIA, Modern Slavery, and Domestic Abuse. These groups will be gathering regularly to support, resource, and inspire members engaged in these important areas of mission and advocacy.

## **9. Making a Mother's Day Appeal: Give the Gift of Belonging**

Mothering Sunday is a special moment to celebrate the mothers and maternal figures who have nurtured us with love, strength, and faith. As you prepare to mark the day, we'd like to gently remind you about our *Make a Mother's Day Appeal* and the difference your support can make.

In Rwanda, many young women step into motherhood while still needing care and guidance themselves. Some face this life-changing journey without the comfort of family or community support. That's why your *Gift of Belonging* matters so much.

Your gift can help provide vital training for community and church leaders, counselling, and spiritual care for those who have experienced trauma, and practical skills that empower young mothers to build secure futures for themselves and their children. It's a simple way to share hope, and to honour someone special in your life at the same time.

### **There's still time to get involved:**

- Make your gift today
- Share the appeal with friends, family, or fellow members

Every prayer, every act of generosity, and every shared message helps a young mother move from isolation to belonging.

### **Make a lasting difference this Mothering Sunday**

Donate or find fun fundraising ideas here:

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

Or call: **020 7222 5533**

Let's make this Mothering Sunday count.

## **10. A Gift of... is back – in time for Mothering Sunday!**

We are delighted to share that A Gift of... is now back in a different format and is available in our online shop! It is called **A Gift of Hope in Britain and Ireland**. This is a great way to celebrate our 150th anniversary by giving a friend, mum, or sister this gift card about Mothers' Union – hopefully, they will go on and decide to become a member!

Proceeds from this gift card will help young mothers, families, single parents, and caregivers to thrive, while also supporting Mothers' Union's vital programmes and project work. It's an ethical gift that supports vulnerable people, enables families to flourish, and strengthens communities and may just mean a new recruit too!

## **11. 2026 Easter & Spring/Summer Gift Guide**

Our 2026 Easter & Spring/Summer Gift Guide is now live, bringing together a strong seasonal range of Easter and Mothering Sunday cards, Everyday greeting cards, special 150th Anniversary gifts, and much more. The collection combines fresh new designs with proven favourites for the season ahead.

The gift guide is completely free to order and no charge for postage & packaging for UK and Ireland. – <https://mueshop.org/collections/mothers-union-gift-guide>

## **12. Celebrate 150 Years of Mothers' Union in Style – Even on Zoom!**

Our wonderful Comms Team has created a set of special 150th anniversary Zoom background pictures for everyone to enjoy. If you'd like to brighten up your virtual meetings with the Mothers' Union 150th logo, you can now download these backgrounds from the Resource Hub. Simply click the link to access these: [Mothers' Union Resource Hub](#)

**Not sure how to change your Zoom background?** Don't worry! Below is a simple step-by-step guide to help you.

## *How to Change Your Zoom Background*

**Step 1:** Go to the resource hub where the 150th Zoom backgrounds are available and download the image you want to use to your computer.

**Step 2:** Launch the Zoom desktop app (Windows or Mac) and sign into your account.

**Step 3:** Click on Choose Virtual Background... or Background & Effects from the menu.

**Step 4:** Click the + button (Add Image) above the virtual backgrounds list, browse to where you saved your 150th anniversary image and select it.

**Step 5:** The image will appear in your background list. Click on it to set it as your active Zoom background.

**Step 6:** Check Video Preview to ensure your face is clear and not overlapping awkwardly with the background.

Now, let's mark this milestone together, wherever we meet, and share the joy of 150 years of faith, fellowship, and service!

### **13. MU Live - your stories bring Mothers' Union to life!**

We encourage you to continue submitting updates through MU Live. Every story shared helps to celebrate the amazing work happening across our movement from small acts of kindness to large community initiatives. These stories inspire others, strengthen our connections, and show the many ways faith in action is transforming lives every day.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the system, please contact us at [Development@mothersunion.org](mailto:Development@mothersunion.org).

Thank you for your continued support!

#### **Membership Team**

Mary Sumner House

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