



From our Diocesan President...

Greetings to all as we enter 2020. The MU theme for the year is about being bold and confident in our faith. I wonder, if we are honest, if we really feel confident and bold as we look at the news and read our papers. There are so many problems in the world. And so many concerns for our children and grandchildren. What will the future hold as we learn more about our climate crisis?

As I set off to spend nearly a month in Antigua at the start of the year it was the first time I would travel on my own after the death of my husband. Our communications with NECA (North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba) were exciting but a bit intermittent. However, prayers were answered along the way. After I had booked my accommodation I heard I was in Ephena, the diocesan president's parish. However, they are relatively large areas covering a number of churches. As I left home I did not have any further contact details and did not know where I would be worshipping the following Sunday. Prayers were answered, as while I was waiting in the airport, I received an email from Ephena with all the details I needed.

On the first day of my stay Ephena called round to welcome me. I was overwhelmed with love and hospitality from my worldwide MU sisters. I worshipped with them, attended meetings, spoke in their churches, enjoyed social events, found out how they were organised and what they did. If we think our diocese is large Ephena has to go between islands. I was inspired by their prayerful, worshipful faith.

As Christians we know that without God we can do nothing but with God's grace and following his will, we can do great things. During Advent we celebrate the double barrelled joy of welcoming the Messiah and all that his life, death and resurrection will mean for our lives. But not only that, we have the promise that he will come again in glory. We can indeed be bold and confident. No other faith or approach to life can offer that.

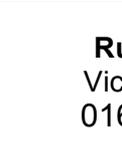
In MU we are part of a worldwide faith movement. As I found first hand it is amazing that the vision of Mary Sumner, her prayer to touch as many lives for Christ each day and her passion to support Christian family life has spread across the world. Rooted and grounded in Christ we have grounds to be bold and confident in our faith.

Looking forward to sharing with many of you in 2020.

Jill Cannings

Some photos of Jill's visit to Antigua are on the back page

Who's Who in MU

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<p>Elizabeth Megahey Vice President 01832 275931 07712 764626 elizabethmegahey@btinternet.com</p>				<p>Hazel Goodman Vice President 07967 838614 hazel@chestnut.clara.net</p>		
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<p>Diocesan Mothers Union Website http://mothersunionpeterborough.org</p>			<p>Diocesan Members Jane Smeathers 01933 357707 jane@smeathers.com</p>		<p>Mothers Union Website https://www.mothersunion.org</p>	
<p>Cards for Members Pam Handley pamartinhandley@btinternet.com</p>		<p>Prayer Chain Julia Freeman 01780 720869</p>		<p>MU Safeguarding Officer Valerie Anslow valerieanslow@icloud.com</p>		

Cards for members

Do you have members who have special birthdays coming up or special anniversaries? Perhaps you have someone who is in hospital or recovering from an operation or illness who might appreciate a card from the Diocese. If so please contact Pam Handley who is always happy to send a card. Pam's email address is: pamartinhandley@btinternet.com

Happy Anniversary! Get Well Soon! Happy Birthday! Congratulations!

A BIG Thank you to The Prayer Chain

Such an important part of our intercessions are prayers for healing both of relationships, accidents, illness and catastrophes around the world. Our Prayer Chain is for you. Just as major events that make the news, God loves to hear our thanks, praise and adoration as well.



On Friday, in late August 2017, we set out to meet our new little cat Pippa from Brixworth RSPCA. From there we went to buy some items we needed for her and after our purchases I fell in the car park and injured my left eye, very badly. An ambulance was called and I was taken to Stoke Mandeville Hospital where a very talented surgeon Mr Adams, repaired the eye very well but could not give me any glimmer of hope of ever seeing out of it again. After many visits to the clinic, after many, many lots of medication to try to bring the high blood pressure in the eye down it was decided to give the eye laser treatment. This was done with local anaesthetic because the eye was in a very tender state. Two – three weeks later I woke up one morning one morning and I could see my left hand and although it was quite blurry it was a really big breakthrough. Things got clearer and I was referred to Mr Larry Benjamin who fitted a remarkable lens that cut out a lot of the eye glare and I now have spectacles that make my vision even clearer. I mentioned these two particular men because they both have biblical surnames. The stitches that held the lens have all been taken out and I have been told everything has settled down and I don't need to attend clinic any more. Isn't that great!

All through these procedures I felt a real sense of calm and peace that only God can give. Your prayers and the prayers said at St. Peter's and various Christian friends around Brackley have really been holding me and comforting me.

Thank you all again. One thing I must share with you. Not only does God answer our prayer but I believe he has a sense of humour. I was in a very low state one day and an old song came into my head "What a difference a day makes, twenty four little hours". This made me laugh. All this took over 2 years to complete.

Love to you all.

Maggie Wright

If you know of someone who needs prayers said for them, please contact the Prayer Chain Co-ordinator, Julia Freeman, on 01780 720869.

**Please send in your articles for the next edition of ComMUNicate by
1st October 2020 to Helen Lynett – helenlynett@btinternet.com**

Flexible Meetings

Life has changed so much since I joined the Mothers' Union 40 years ago. Many more mums go out to work now, and sometimes the fathers stay at home, and the traditional way of meeting as a Mothers' Union in a once-a-month setting is not always possible. We want to encourage more members to join our great organisation so we should face the challenges of this 21st century world and think a bit differently about how we meet. We don't have to be restricted to once a month in the afternoon or evening in the church or church hall. Why not have a go at freeing your imagination, look at your congregation and friends – what would work for them ?

In order to comply with our constitution, Mothers' Union members have to pay a membership subscription but this can be direct to Mary Sumner House as a friend or to the diocese as a Diocesan Member. If you meet as a branch, you will need a Mothers' Union bank account but otherwise, it is not essential. There need not be any other formality to setting up your group.

Here are some suggestions that have already been tried – would they work for you?
Consider the following:

- @Heart of Community (a presentation at Edinburgh General Meeting marketplace) & run in Canterbury, has encouraged new leaders both nationally and locally
- Muloa (Mothers' Union listens observes acts) has encouraged new membership, facilitation skills, and stopped some branches closing and assisted some to step up as leaders in branches – although this needs doing slowly and thoroughly.
- 'Stories on the Streets' in growing membership and getting folk within MU and outside to take on leadership roles
- 'Mapping the Future' has encouraged members to step into leadership roles including Diocesan President
- And most of all getting folk involved in initiatives has the most impact on people joining, flexibility can work at all levels-
- One diocese had 3 people acting as a Diocesan President (one ran the meetings, one went to conferences etc, and the other picked up what she needed to)
- Birmingham have their election a year early and have the DP elect to learn alongside the current DP. They have a 4 year cycle.
- you may also like to know we have had male Diocesan Presidents, and lots of chaps on the Trustee Board.

If you want to talk over an idea or require some help contact the Diocesan President Mrs Jill Cannings or your area Vice President – details in Communicate.

Why not share **your** ideas – write to the editor of Communicate, Helen Lynett (details in Communicate)

References – for more details see:-

Friends of Mothers' Union
today/benefits-membership
Heart of Community

[https://www.mothersunion.org/get-involved/join-us-](https://www.mothersunion.org/get-involved/join-us-today/benefits-membership)

MULOA
Stories on the Street

[https://www.mothersunion.org/news/impacting-local-](https://www.mothersunion.org/news/impacting-local-communities-through-church-based-toddler-groups)
[communities-through-church-based-toddler-groups](https://www.mothersunion.org/projects/muloa)

<https://www.mothersunion.org/projects/muloa>

<https://www.mothersunion.org/projects/metamorphosis>

The invisible member

The heating is on
The door's open wide
The kettle is ready
All welcome inside
The speaker arrives and takes to her chair
The leader then welcomes and opens in prayer

The theme for the year is the subject we hear
Building hope and confidence
The message is clear
Without God in our lives
We under-achieve
But with Jesus our Lord
We can truly believe
His love is so great
And His blessings so huge
He keeps us safe
He is our refuge
He loves us regardless of the wrong things we do
But he's always there for us to turn to
He is our Lord, our Saviour too
We humbly give thanks as we come close to you

The meeting is over
The chairs put away
The cakes not eaten saved for another day
As we lock the door we say a prayer
Thank you Lord Jesus for being there.

JW 2020

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families



Annual Gathering 2020
Belfast 25th - 26th September 2020

Peterborough Diocese Mothers' Union Prayers



JULY

We pray for all members in the branches of Abington, Christ Church, Holy Trinity with St Paul, Kingsthorpe, St Alban's, St Benedict's, St James', St Mary's, St Michael's and Weston Favell in the Greater Northampton Deanery.

As the summer approaches, we open our hearts to seek your will, to be strong in faith and true to your Word. We pray for all mothers as they care for their families, sometimes against the odds. Give them the patience, strength and love to be good and faithful mothers, encouraging others who struggle with the demands of parenthood.

We pray for successful fetes and summer events, as they show the work of the Mothers Union to all who visit.

We give thanks for the sun and the beauty in your creation; and like the sun helps the flowers grow; so, the Son helps us grow in you. Lord, in your mercy.... Amen

AUGUST

We pray for all members in the branches of Paulersbury, Tove and Whittlebury in the Towcester Deanery.

We pray for our founder, Mary Sumner and thank you for her witness, courage and example of love and service.

We remember the Transfiguration when Jesus meets Moses and Elijah. Like the disciples who witnessed this event, help us to be good and faithful witnesses for you.

We give thanks for the beauty of the flowers and the trees; the high summer days and the long warm nights. Lord, in your mercy.... Amen

SEPTEMBER

We pray for our link dioceses and their MU Presidents – for the dioceses of Oyo and Aba Ngwa North in Nigeria and Catherine and Odi, for the diocese of Rumbek in South Sudan and Hellen and Rebecca, for the diocese of Soroti in Uganda and Rose and Sarah, for the diocese of North Eastern Caribbean & Aruba and Ephena and for our own diocese of Peterborough and our President Jill. We thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross; help us to be strong and when we need to give of ourselves for our faith, we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit for courage and strength. We pray for all our Wave of Prayer services and for a successful and uplifting Annual meeting in Belfast. We pray also for the Deanery Leaders' lunch at Crossways, Uppingham, which takes place this month. We give thanks for those who give their time freely to enable the work of Mothers' Union and all charities who work for the good of others. Lord, in your mercy.... Amen



OCTOBER

We pray for all members in the branches of Cransley & Geddington, Rothwell, Rushton, Saints & Angels and St Andrew's in the Kettering Deanery.

Help us to pray for those in need of your help and support. For those caught up in modern day slavery; for all who are forced to work in deplorable conditions. We pray for the MU Trustees as they meet at the Parish Hall in Kettering and for those who work at and attend retreats at Launde Abbey. As we pray, open our minds to your Word, and we ask that you answer our prayers and respond to our needs, not just our wants.

Lord, in your mercy.... Amen

NOVEMBER

We pray for all members in the branches of All Hallows, All Saints, Earls Barton, Orlingbury and Harrowden and Wollaston & Strixton in the Wellingborough Deanery.

Ever loving Father, we live our lives as your saints, and like the saints in heaven, we follow their lead and live to your wisdom and glory. We pray for our MU AGM and Eucharist at All Saints Church, Wellingborough. Give strength and courage to all who serve your Holy Word. We pray for all who are without faith, hope or love.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. You turn our darkness into light: and in your light shall we see light.

Lord, in your mercy.... Amen

DECEMBER

We pray for all members in the branches of Eye, Longthorpe, Paston, Werrington in the Peterborough Deanery and for the Oundle members in their Deanery.

Holy Lord, we pray for this holy month, when we celebrate the conception and birth of our Lord Jesus as God in his earthly form.

We pray for the Christmas festivities; for fetes and carol services. We pray for strength for those who prepare services and Christmas events. Help us not to be caught up with shopping for presents and food, that we forget the true meaning of Christmas.

We remember the poor, the vulnerable and the lonely who find this time of year depressing and difficult.

We give thanks for the charities and organisations who work to help the disadvantaged and needy.

We pray for the work of the Mothers' Union across the Peterborough diocese, in the UK and across the world and for the work being undertaken for the 16 days of Activism. Bless us Father and keep us.

In faith we live our lives to you; in truth we practice your word; in love we live to help each other. Lord, in your mercy.... Amen

Merry Christmas to you all
from the Mothers' Union members
at St. Benedict Church in Hunsbury, Northampton.

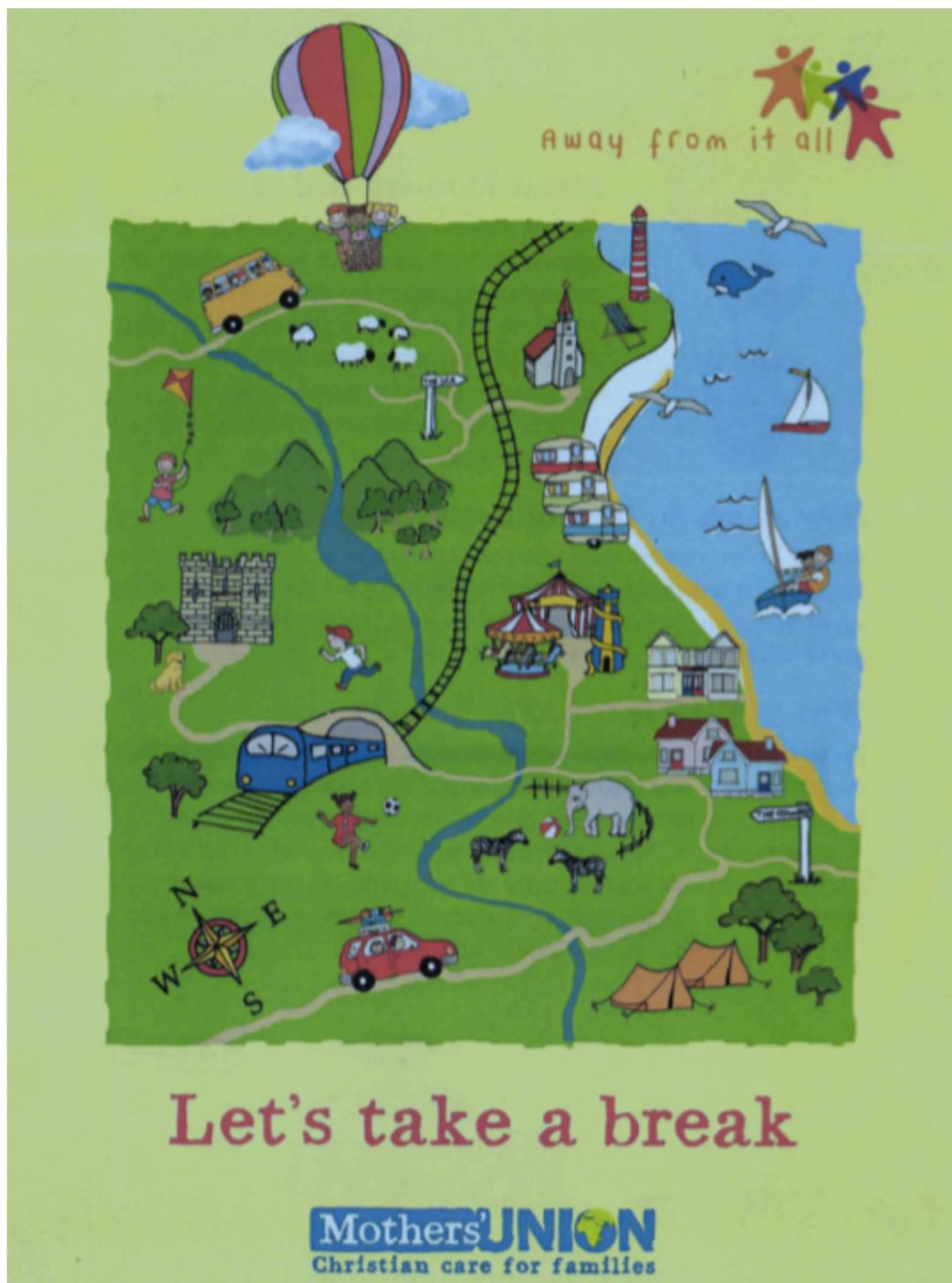
Thank you to Catherine from the branch of St. Benedict Church in Hunsbury, Northampton
for writing these prayers.

❖ QUIET EVENTS ❖ QUIET EVENTS ❖ QUIET EVENTS ❖ QUIET EVENTS ❖

As St Benedict's was ideally located in the middle of the Diocese with ample parking; we are arranging another evening there on Wednesday, 6th May 2020 at 7pm. We are delighted that this is being led by Bishop Andrew Proud, past MU national Chaplain.

The next residential retreat will be held at Launde Abbey from Monday 3.00pm 12th October to Wednesday 14th October, depart after lunch. Further information re cost and how to book will be made available in due course.

Please contact Revd Christine for further information: c.ostler@btinternet.com; 01933 226730.

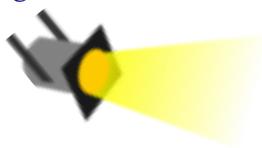
**AFIA**

Anne & Margareta
AFIA
co-ordinators for
Peterborough Diocese

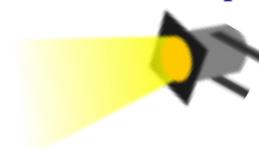
Contact them on

01572 820534

anniedt@john-lewis.com



Spotlight on Brixworth Deanery



Brixworth church has been described as 'perhaps the most imposing architectural memorial of the seventh century north of the Alps' and we are proud to be part of Brixworth Deanery. As a deanery in 2019 we met for the Wave of Prayer service in West Haddon as well as for a strawberry tea close to Mary Sumner day in Pitsford and for our Advent Carol service in Yelvertoft.

Our Branches

PITSFORD: MU offers strong support for the church as it raises money for new facilities through the sale of jam and chutney. Harvest Lunch is part of the MU support for the Hope Centre.

New Mums in the village are visited and welcomed with a card and a knitted ball. Although the branch is small in numbers members work together to make the MU a real presence in the village.

RIDGEWAY: They enjoyed a visit from Mrs Sheran Harper, our Worldwide President on her way to Coventry cathedral and 'Thy Kingdom Come'. She made a point of greeting each member personally. Members knitted, sewed up, then put 500 angels round the villages of the benefice with a note to say, "take me home with love from your church family" to show members of the community that the church cares about each one.

The branch enjoyed a visit from Jenny Jordan who was responsible for the re-opening of the branch at Long Buckby and West Haddon. She brought members of the new branch she has started in Leicester diocese. Both DPs also came.

UPLANDS: The branch supported 'Make a Mothers Day' and the 'Shoe Box' appeal. There is support for the Baptism services and their anniversaries in the benefice.

During Advent travelling Cribs go to the pre-school and two primary schools across the benefice.

WELFORD: Mrs Thelma Cattle, a previous Branch Leader, made a presentation of a certificate to Mrs. Ann Barber to mark 50 years of MU membership. Tea and cakes were served to make it a real celebration. A fish and chip supper is a lovely occasion shared with husbands. This year Mrs Lesley Marsh, VP from Rochester Diocese was passing by on a narrow boat and she joined the branch.

She took the accompanying photograph and wrote to Ann, the Branch Leader, "You are an amazing lady to have kept your group going for so long a time and at your age. What a privilege and joy." Mothers Union members joined with other organisations in the village for the World Day of Prayer and they are involved in the Good Friday Road show which sees a lot of children in Church.

YELVERTOFT: The Branch made Lent lunches each week, a popular and well-attended event which is their main fund raiser. The branch visit was to Leicester Cathedral, followed by sharing lunch together. Members keep the Link with Korean Mothers' Union in Seoul Dioceses

As a deanery we support local Food Banks with gifts of food, toiletries and other necessities. In all of our monthly meetings we enjoy fun and fellowship as we gather in prayer, then listen to a speaker before talking about our support for the Frances Lunch Club and other MU charities and projects. In our parishes we support Baptism and Marriage.

During Advent some of us send our travelling cribs to visit our primary schools as well as villagers in their own homes; this is sometimes enhanced by a sheep trail. All of us and our supporters knit for different places of need as well as for the fish and chip babies; and we make pillow case dresses for Africa. We continue to enjoy our visits to the Annual meetings, in Portsmouth in 2019 and this year Belfast, here we come!



Victorian Christmas at the Higham Christmas Sparkle Weekend

Higham Ferrers MU Branch arranged a display in St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers, as part of the 'Victorian Christmas' theme, during the Higham Christmas Sparkle weekend.

The display was depicting Mary Sumner's sitting room, at the first Christmas of the Union of Mothers. The tea-table was complete with all the finery of a Victorian tea-table, with other objects around to make it look like a Rectory. On the table were also prayer cards, as they would have used, with Mary Sumners' personal prayer. In the room was also a nativity set, and toys on the floor for the children (who surely must have been present with their mothers, the reason for Mary starting MU!) In the corner was a Christmas tree (with just candles) as Prince Albert had explained represented the stars. The window was overloaded with all the usual Christmas greenery (each being symbolic in some way) a drape and tassels below, a large picture of Queen Victoria and a bronze bust, with candlesticks at each end (being for lighting purposes, not decorations!). A smaller table held some embroidery and Victorian scissors, a prayer book and an early sepia photograph of Mary. A chair was covered with an antimacassar and there was a huge quantity of lace covering all (everything over-the-top, as we believe was the Victorian fashion of the day).



Tove Benefice M.U. contributed this tree to the tree festival held at St. Bartholomew's, Greens Norton on the 7th & 8th December 2019. Proceeds shared between the church and Macmillan nurses.

Update on the Daylight Centre, Wellingborough

The Centre started in Wellingborough in 1994 as a Mothers' Union project led by the then Diocesan President Judy Philips. It was set up as a Mothers' Union response to assisting the homeless on the streets and to give the daytime homeless a place to go (those who had lodgings for the night, like bed and breakfast, but had to be on the street during the day). The centre is now an independent charity and is in its third home in Wellingborough now at The Queen's Hall on the High Street, a building which older Wellingburians know as the original Wellingborough Library.

The facilities on offer remain similar to Judy's vision, that is, advise and counselling help, signposting to other agencies who can assist with benefits, medical issues and mental health problems, as well as the more practical help of hot showers, changes of clothes, hot food, company, people to talk to and an unending stream of tea. There are now 2 full time paid staff and three part-time paid staff and around 60 volunteers who assist in the Centre, the Food Bank and in the shop. 2019 figures show an increase of usage by clients - 65% now stay for meals as opposed to 52% in 2018. There are an average of 38 clients per day, with a maximum of 52 people on some days. During 2019, 5,041 meals were served to clients, these are either free or low-price, whatever clients can afford. 57 clients took up the offer of a hot shower, which also means towels, toiletries and new underwear, during 2019 as opposed to 44 people during 2018. The Centre also offers free internet access, acts as a mailing address for clients and offers locker space, which is invaluable to the homeless. It is a safe meeting place for those who have nowhere else to go.

The Wellingborough Food Bank opened in 2013 and is staffed by volunteers. During 2019 it saw an increase of 49% of usage on 2018, this resulted in 2,555 food parcels being distributed as opposed to 1,017 in 2018. Over 30 organisations recommend people to this Food Bank.

The Daylight Shop opened in November 2018 and in its first year produced an income of £47,000, £30,000 of which went directly to the Daylight Centre to assist with funding. The shop has now moved and is situated in Cambridge Street in Wellingborough.

The latest initiative in which Daylight is involved is the Night Shelter situated on the Embankment in Wellingborough. This is a 20-bed facility run by the Wellingborough Homeless Forum, an independent charity, of which Daylight is a member. Hot water, bedding, toiletries and hot food are also on offer here between November and March.

The Daylight Centre receives very little grant funding, so relies on the kindness of individual people and local churches for its income. There is always a need for more volunteer help so if anyone is interested, please contact Jacqui Coverly on 07801436856.



Oundle Branch had their first meeting of the year in early February. This took the form of a Eucharist followed by a cooked lunch. It was a very enjoyable occasion. At the beginning of the service, four new members were enrolled, one of them being my daughter.

Elizabeth Megahey

