

Central Charity's Monthly Update – August 2026 Edition

Dear Members,

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

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1. Join Us for a Special Mary Sumner Day Celebration on BBC Radio 4

This Mary Sumner Day, Sunday 9 August, we invite members, friends and supporters of Mothers' Union to join together in a very special moment of celebration and thanksgiving.

As we mark 150 years since Mary Sumner founded Mothers' Union, we are delighted that BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship will be celebrating this remarkable milestone with a special programme at 8.10am.

The service will be led by Bishop Rosemarie Mallett, who will help us reflect on Mary Sumner's vision, the legacy of Mothers' Union, and the ongoing impact of our ministry in supporting families and communities around the world.

So, set your reminders and your alarms, make a cup of tea and join the Mothers' Union family across the world by tuning to **BBC Radio 4 at 8.10am on Sunday 9 August** using the link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnds>

2. Mothers' Union 150th Anniversary Worldwide Gathering 2026

One Worldwide Family: Growing in Faith, Living in Action, United in Fellowship

Join us in Durban, South Africa, 30th September – 3rd October for a once-in-a-generation celebration of 150 years of Mothers' Union.

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's a celebration of who we are, what we stand for, and how we will light the way for generations to come. For more information - 150th Anniversary Worldwide Gathering.

3. 150th Anniversary Service at St Paul's and the Annual Gathering

We are still recovering from these wonderful celebratory events in June; the Annual Gathering on 11th June at the Emmanuel Centre, next door to Mary Sumner House was the venue for 650 members to enjoy a programme of former presidents, members and partners celebrating Mothers' Union! A brilliant Exhibition of the achievements of the movement was available to members to attend that week in the conference hall at Mary Sumner House, the pride felt by members at our achievements and impact was palpable. See more - [Annual Gathering - 150 years](#) and - [Annual Gathering Video](#)

Please find WWP, Kathleen's Snow's address at St Paul's - [WWP Testimonial Address at St Paul's 150th Celebratory Service](#) and the slideshow with some links from the Annual Gathering - [150th Anniversary Annual Gathering - outline slideshow with links](#)

Those who attended are invited to provide feedback for both events.

-<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/150AnnualGathering> and
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/150StPauls>

4. Coventry Diocese Hits New Heights in the 150th Challenges

When the 150th Anniversary Challenges were first launched, Coventry Diocese wondered whether the ambitious targets could really be achieved. Just months later, they are proving that with faith, enthusiasm and teamwork, those goals are well within reach.

The Diocese has already welcomed 26 new members, with more due to be enrolled on Mary Sumner Day, while fundraising continues to flourish. A 150th Thank You Lunch raised £661 for the 150th Fund, and the upcoming Abseil Challenge has already raised £1,500 before participants even take the leap!

Creativity has been at the heart of Coventry's celebrations. More than 250 people attended a Family Fun Day at Coventry Cathedral, and members have represented Mothers' Union at the Warwickshire Scouts' **"Get In"** Festival. At the Annual Church of England Golf Day, Paul Morris proudly represented Mothers' Union and helped bring home one of the trophies, while raising the profile of the movement.

The celebrations continue with plans for a special tea party for people experiencing homelessness to mark Mary Sumner Day, demonstrating that the challenges are about far more than fundraising, they are raising awareness, growing membership, strengthening communities and sharing God's love in practical ways.



And finally, there's just one challenge Coventry hasn't conquered yet; recruiting women golfers!

The Diocese is keen to see more women join next year's Church of England Golf Day, so if you enjoy a round of golf and are part of the worshipping life of your church, why not consider getting involved? It could be your turn to represent

Mothers' Union next year!

Congratulations to everyone in Coventry Diocese for embracing the spirit of the 150th anniversary with such energy and joy. As Karen, DP of Coventry Diocese puts it so perfectly: **"Much fun has been had... all in Jesus' name."**

5. Building Connections at General Synod

It was a privilege to have a Mothers' Union stand in the Exhibition Hall for General Synod, held in York from 10-14 July. Lucy Bubb, Faith and Church Engagement Manager, and Claire Mescia, National Programmes Manager, were supported by Barbara Ford and Anne Dewing (York Diocese) and John and Christine Sharp (York PP) to ensure that someone was available to talk to Synod delegates throughout the day and evening.



There were some great conversations! We heard that we have a lot of support from Synod members, recognising the fantastic work that our members do in Britain and Ireland and globally, but we also spoke to several people whose MU membership had lapsed, either through branches closing or circumstance. We encouraged them

to reach out to their MU diocesan leads and to re-begin their membership.

Through conversations it also became clear that having MU diocesan stands or stalls at local Diocesan Clergy Conferences are valuable opportunities; these can take place from annually to every three years. Do you take that opportunity in your Diocese?

We would love to hear the outcomes by emailing faith@mothersunion.org

6. Celebrating Mary Sumner Day at 150 Years

On 9 August, Mothers' Union members around the world will celebrate Mary Sumner Day, a special opportunity to give thanks for the life, faith and vision of our founder and to reflect on the incredible legacy she began 150 years ago.

In 1876, Mary Sumner gathered women together in prayer and fellowship, believing that by supporting one another and serving their communities, they could make a lasting difference. From that small beginning, Mothers' Union has grown into a global movement of people committed to transforming families and communities through faith, hope and action.

As we mark our 150th anniversary year, we celebrate the thousands of members who continue to carry Mary Sumner's vision forward. Through prayer, practical support, advocacy, fundraising and community outreach, members across the UK and Ireland are demonstrating that the heart of Mothers' Union remains as strong today as it was when it began.

This Mary Sumner Day is not only a time to look back with gratitude but also an opportunity to look forward with hope, recognising the difference we can make when we come together in faith and friendship.

Across the country, dioceses, branches and groups are marking Mary Sumner Day in many creative and meaningful ways. From worship services and fellowship gatherings to acts of kindness and **Sunday Takeover** events—where members lead or participate in church services to raise awareness of Mothers' Union and encourage new membership. These celebrations reflect the spirit of Mary Sumner's vision and the continued impact of Mothers' Union.

Here are some of the ways members are celebrating Mary Sumner Day in this very special 150th anniversary year:

- **Rochester Diocese** will hold a Choral Evensong at Rochester Cathedral with the Provincial Chaplain for Canterbury preaching. Members will process with banners, followed by an informal picnic around the Cathedral grounds.
- **Sheffield Diocese** will celebrate with a service at Sheffield Cathedral, welcome new members, host refreshments, a picnic with deckchairs and outdoor games, and hold a raffle funded through their 150th Anniversary seed funding. A further diocesan celebration will take place at Colwall Parish Church, which has a special historical connection with Mary Sumner.
- Several dioceses are organising Takeover Sunday events, where members will lead or participate in church services to raise awareness of Mothers' Union and encourage new membership.
- **Newcastle Diocese** will host a community outreach event at Newcastle Cathedral with refreshments and opportunities for visitors to learn more about Mothers' Union.

Please send details of your Mary Sumner Day activities to the Membership Team by emailing membership@mothersunion.org so they can be promoted through our social media platforms.

[Sunday Takeover Talk Resource](#)

[Sunday Takeover Service Outline](#)

[Other activities information and resources](#)

7. United in Prayer Across the World

Throughout the year we pray for groups of dioceses as part of the Wave of Prayer. These groupings create the privilege of prayerful support, given and received. For our 150th anniversary, Chelmsford Diocese held a Zoom prayer meeting at 3pm on 20 June (the last of three days when their Wave of Prayer grouping was being prayed for globally) and invited members from their link dioceses to join. There were over 40 members and clergy from Chelmsford, Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Rejaf in South Sudan, as well as Hpa-an and Toungoo dioceses in Myanmar, who used to be part of their grouping prior to 2014. A representative from each diocese spoke about their MU projects, their challenges and joys, and then each diocese was prayed over, as well as the three dioceses who didn't join. We would love to hear if and how you are able to engage with your Wave of Prayer groupings, and if you have done anything different for our 150th anniversary year by emailing faith@mothersunion.org

8. Celebrating 150 Years Together Celebrating Your Incredible 150th Anniversary Fundraising

A huge **thank you** to everyone who has been fundraising to celebrate Mothers' Union's **150th anniversary**. We are so grateful for the enthusiasm, creativity and dedication that members, branches and dioceses have shown throughout this special year. Every coffee morning, sponsored walk, afternoon tea, concert, cake sale and community event is helping us celebrate our remarkable history while investing in the future of our movement.

August is proving to be a particularly busy month for fundraising, and we want to make sure you have everything you need to support your celebrations. We have plenty of **150th Anniversary stickers, posters and leaflets** available, which can be sent to individual branches and dioceses on request. If you would like to receive these resources, please contact fundraising@mothersunion.org.

The attached PDF explains how the funds raised will support Mothers' Union's life-changing work around the world. If your branch or diocese is engaged in a fundraising challenge, but you haven't yet added your event to our **150th Fundraising Challenge JustGiving page**, you're missing a wonderful opportunity to showcase your efforts and inspire others. By sharing your fundraising you'll help build momentum, celebrate what members are

achieving across the movement, and encourage even more people to get involved in our 150th anniversary celebrations.

If you have photos or stories from your fundraising events, please send them to Jonnie at fundraising@mothersunion.org.

9. A Day of Hope at Lambeth Palace Celebrates 150 Years of Mothers' Union

More than 900 people gathered at Lambeth Palace on 31 July for a special HOPE (Heritage Open Palace Experience) Day, jointly hosted by the Dioceses of London and Southwark in support of Mothers' Union.



One of only four charity open days held each year at the Palace, the event welcomed visitors to explore its historic rooms while discovering more about the work and impact of Mothers' Union. The day was attended by our Worldwide President, Trustees and staff from Mary Sumner House as part of our 150th anniversary celebrations.

With displays, activities and a warm welcome from volunteers, the event was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our rich heritage, raise awareness of our mission, and share the Mothers' Union story with hundreds of visitors. Congratulations to everyone

who helped make the day such a memorable success.

10. A Joyful Welcome for Archbishop Sarah in Accra

Members of Mothers' Union Accra were delighted to welcome Archbishop Sarah during her visit to Ghana, sharing the joy of fellowship and the inspiring work they are doing to support families, women and communities across the Diocese of Accra and beyond.



Archbishop Sarah spent time with members, hearing about their ministry and the many ways Mothers' Union continues to make a difference through faith, service and practical action. She encouraged members to remain rooted in Christ, reminding them that their strength comes from knowing they are loved and saved by Jesus Christ.

“Build on him, know that you are loved and saved by Jesus Christ. That enables our tree to grow strong and you to continue your work,” she said.

The welcome was made even more special when the Provincial President of Mothers' Union Accra presented Archbishop Sarah with a beautifully designed Mothers' Union branded outfit, a joyful celebration of their shared identity and commitment to the movement.

It was a wonderful moment of connection, encouragement and celebration, as members showcased the vibrant ministry of Mothers' Union in Ghana and the lasting impact of their work in transforming lives.

11. Bringing Communities Together with MU Big Teddy Bear Picnics

Is your branch or diocese planning a **MU Big Picnic** or **Teddy Bear Picnic** as part of our **150th anniversary celebrations**?

We would love to help make your event even bigger! Let us know your picnic date and we'll help spread the word across Mothers' Union's social media channels, encouraging others to celebrate with you.

Even better, the team at **Mary Sumner House** would love to join in! Staff are happy to attend and volunteer to help make your picnic a fun, welcoming and memorable day for everyone.

Already held your picnic? Please send us your photographs and a few highlights from the day. Send these to membership@mothersunion.org

12. Sustainability Without Losing Soul: A Reflection for Mothers' Union

Atim Abrams represented Mothers' Union at the recent Churches Together England (CTE) Charities & Network Associations Retreat, joining leaders from organisations including Compassion UK, Tearfund, Christian Aid, Safe Families and Stewardship to reflect on faith, leadership and working together in God's mission.

The retreat was a valuable opportunity to build relationships, share experiences and consider how Christian organisations can respond faithfully to the challenges of today while remaining rooted in Christ.

A key message from the retreat came from Janie Oliver, Chief Executive of Stewardship, whose presentation, ***Sustainability Without Losing Soul***, challenged leaders to see sustainability as more than finances or organisational growth. Instead, she reminded us that lasting ministry is rooted in Christ and that generosity flows from gratitude for God's generosity towards us.

For Mothers' Union, this is an important reminder that as we seek to strengthen membership, develop new partnerships and ensure the long-term sustainability of our movement, we must never lose sight of who we are. Our future will not be secured simply because we have better plans or increased income, even though these are important. It will be sustained by trusting in

God, through prayer, faithful discipleship, generous hearts and a shared commitment to God's mission.

It was also encouraging to see that Mothers' Union was the longest-standing organisations represented at the retreat. For 150 years, members have faithfully carried forward Mary Sumner's vision of sharing God's love through practical action.

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 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

Thank you for your continued support!

Membership Team

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