

We pray for all members in **Kumasi, Ghana**. (A candle is lit).

Kumasi is a major city in south-central Ghana, with a population of well over 2 million. It is about 250 miles north west of the capital, Accra, and is carved out of a dense forest among hills rising to 1,000 feet. It has a humid, wet climate. Osei Tutu, a 17th-century Asante king, chose the site for his capital and conducted land negotiations under a *kumtree*, so giving the then town its name. Due to its location on north-south trade routes Kumasi became a major commercial centre.

In January the average daytime temperature in Kumasi is 89 degrees Fahrenheit and 68 degrees at night. January has an average of 2 days rainfall amounting to about ½" and an average of 186 hours of sunshine.

After defeating the Asante empire in 1874, the British opened new trade routes in the region and Kumasi's importance was diminished. It did not revive until the early 1900s, when the British took control; cacao cultivation was introduced, and the railroad from Sekondi was built. A rapid population increase led to the city's expansion and to the drainage of swamps, the installation of a sewage system, and modern city planning.

Religion plays a critical role in the development of Ghana and influences almost everything in the daily lives of the Ghanaian including family life, economic activities and education. Christianity is the main religion in Ghana with 72% of the population being members of the various Christian denominations in the country. Islam is the secondary religion in the country with a following of about 17.6% of the population. Religious tolerance is very high in Ghana.

There are 2,500 Mothers' Union members in Ghana. Members see their role as serving each other and reaching out to the vulnerable in the community. A growing area that they are responding to is the isolation of older people. They are joining with other agencies such as HelpAge Ghana to provide fellowship and practical assistance to people who are housebound.

Members are also reaching out to other marginalized groups such as those in drug rehabilitation, prisoners and those managing mental health issues. Members provide practical relief through distribution of food, cleaning products, sanitary towels, clothes, blankets and soap. Members are also confronting difficult issues such as sexual abuse of girls, child trafficking and the discrimination faced by widows.

*Lord, we give you thanks today for the mission of Mothers' Union in Ghana and worldwide to bring transformation to individuals, families and communities in loving, compassionate, bold and non-judgemental ways.*

**Amen.**