

# MIA mia

ANGLICAN  
MOTHERS UNION  
AUSTRALIA

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## **ANGLICAN MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA**

**Vision:** Our vision is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships.

**Mission:** Sharing Christ's love by encouraging, strengthening and supporting marriage and family life.

The PURPOSE of Mothers' Union is to be especially concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life.

Its AIM is the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life.

Its FIVE OBJECTS are:

1. To uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and to promote its wider understanding.
2. To encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the church.
3. To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.
4. To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.
5. To help those whose family life has met with adversity.

## ***Mia Mia***

A quarterly magazine of Anglican Mothers Union Australia.

MIA MIA is an aboriginal word for 'home' and also stands for Mothers in Australia.

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### **Have your say in *Mia Mia***

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Please send all correspondence to the editor.

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Building Hope and Confidence in a Changing World

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*Cover photo:*

Pamela Abana, Melanesia PP,  
Denise Jefferies, Wangaratta DP,  
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# A Word from Anne



**Rev'd Anne Kennedy**

Peace and Reconciliation Workshops, and they will take what they learned back to their own communities and encourage and promote harmonious relationships between tribal factions.

You have supported our three northern-most dioceses, through the Northern Outreach Fund, to enable isolated clergy families to meet together for encouragement and support. You have provided books for Indigenous theological students. You have provided funds to ensure access to remote communities by Diocesan workers for Safe Training, Bible teaching, and program development.

In your dioceses you have provided loving care through the coffee ministry held at several courts throughout the country. You have brought hundreds of women together to participate in workshops and seminars that touch their hearts as they grapple with pressures of

*Gratitude* - it's a word that's not used enough today. But I would like to express my deepest gratitude to you, the members of Anglican Mothers Union Australia. In your typical way, you will say "Who me? I don't do anything special". But you do. By your prayer and actions you help support families all around Australia, and across the world. You do make a difference!

You have helped South Sudanese women leaders reach a greater understanding of each other through the





today's world. You have provided warm clothes for seafarers, beautifully handmade grieving sets for babies who have died before birth, knee-rugs for the elderly, embroidered stoles for clergy, and who knows how many hand-crafted articles for street stalls and market days. And that's just scratching the surface, as you know.

Recently, we put out a call for the names of members who were 90 years and over (Mary Sumner House staff wanted to send cards to them, but only allowed 10 for the entire zone – a slight misjudgment). The response was overwhelming – 11 dioceses responded before we said 'Stop!' We listed 112 members who were 90+, and we know there are more. Many would be 50 year badge recipients – how many centuries of prayer and service have been offered by them? And many are still very active in their branches, praise God!

I want also to express my gratitude to those members who have just joined. Recently I was at a BBQ, and fell into conversation with a person I didn't know, who was transitioning to semi-retirement. "What will you do?" I asked. She mentioned some leisure activities, she then said "Oh, and I've just joined the Mothers Union". Barbara, you are very welcome as a new member, and I'm sure that you will be surrounded by love and prayer of older members as you 'help drive them to MU functions'. Encourage your friends to come along, get involved in projects, see what MU is doing around the world. Catch the vision! You won't regret it!

Members of AMUA do make a difference. Keep encouraging, supporting and above all, praying that God's love will shine in the hearts of everyone we meet, through the prayers we breathe, the words we speak, and the lives we live!

Anne



# Weathering the storms

ROBIN RAY

As I sit down to write the first Mia Mia article for 2020, thunder rumbles and crashes outside heralding another thunderstorm (if my husband's aunt were here she would be under the bed!). A storm that comes with rain lowers the temperature, cuts through the humidity and promises water for the dry soil, bringing new growth.

This is about our fifth thunderstorm over the last few weeks, turning our dust bowl of a yard into some resemblance of a lawn. I love the smell of rain, the promised refreshment it carries and the strength of fast flowing water as the rain pours down. Finally, as the storm recedes, the garden is awash with droplets and drips glistening in the sunlight, highlighting afresh the glory of God's creation.



Storms come in many forms, sometimes leaving damage and destruction in their wake. Cyclones are a part of summer life for our members in northern Australia and the Pacific. Members have experienced flooding in the Philippines and Indonesia, and major wind storms just before Christmas killed two children in the Diocese of Nampula in Mozambique. Over the last three going into four months, fire storms have been a reality for members in many of our Australian dioceses.

This summer may have produced other storms in your life, not always of the weather variety or the pleasant experiences I described in the opening paragraph. Storms induce a response in us. Sometimes we may want to metaphorically *getting under the bed* until we can cope. Mostly though, we figure out a way to manage the outcome dealing with the events the best way we can and seeking the help we need from material, spiritual, social and other resources. As Christians we know Jesus will help us through the storm, particularly the peace that He brings and the stillness of spirit that we can have through Him - Mark 4: 37-41.

I encourage you to pause reading for a few moments and reflect on the *storms* that have touched you in recent months, either personally or through your associations other people.

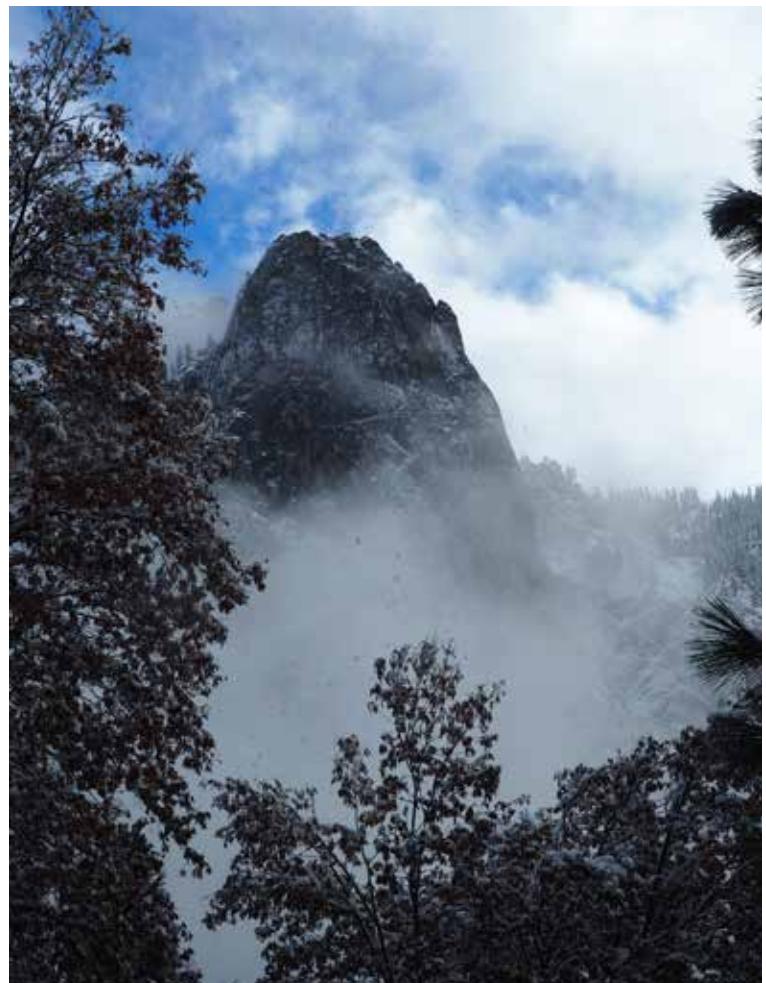
How did you react to these situations?

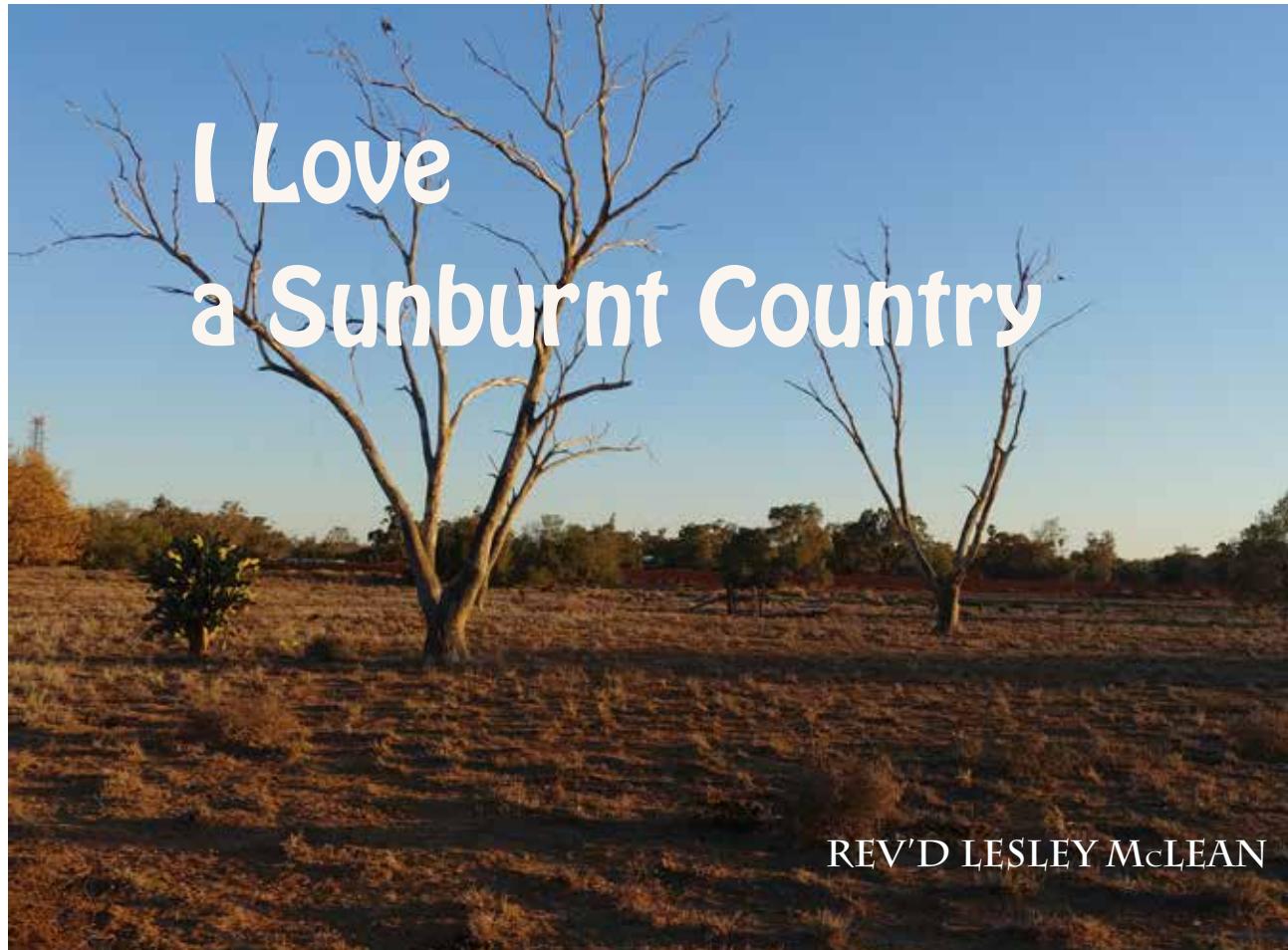
What have you learned about yourself as a result of working through storms?

The Church's season of Lent offers us time to build our spiritual resources and resilience so we can face the challenges and storms in our lives. It's a time when we practice intensely to walk closer with our Lord and to further grow in our faith and trust in Him. Instead of thinking negatively about what to give up for Lent, use Lent as a positive time. Time to take control of the busyness in your life and deliberately make time for reading, prayer and reflection.

It is easy to slip into the same routines and we hear familiar bible passages throughout Lent. I encourage you to engage more deeply with and listen more intently to the word of God through worship and in groups. Also find your own space and time for reflection the parts of our lives that are not consistent with Christ's teaching. Make this your personal pilgrimage through the weeks of Lent.

As you experience the power of the risen Lord and the great celebrations of Easter, may you also remember that because of the Ascension Jesus is with members of MU at all times and wherever they are in our global community.





REV'D LESLEY McLEAN

**Dear God, help us to love our country with all its terrors and beauties.**

In South Australia in the middle of the twentieth century I learnt a poem and it taught me something about love and acceptance of place. Wikipedia reports that Dorothea Mackellar's poem, *My Country* is widely known in Australia, especially its second stanza, which begins:

*I love a sunburnt country  
A land of sweeping plains,  
Of ragged mountain ranges,  
Of droughts and flooding rains."*

Do we? Do we LOVE the dust and the spinifex? Do we love the saltpans and the meandering Murray? Is 'the wide brown land' really for me? for you? What about droughts and floods? Have we adapted to this island of ours, have we taken it to love and to cherish with all its unusual flora and fauna, its brownness, its grey-green plants, its soil that fares badly under the hooves of the animals we brought here to provide food and clothing and transport and pets? Thousands are now wild and are destructive and deadly to native flora and fauna.

Love Australia???

The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser described Mackellar's 'little poem' as striking the right note of "...the clear, ringing, triumphant note of love and trust in [Australia]." wikipedia

In an interview in 1967, Mackellar described her reasons for writing the poem.

*Not really a special reason. But a friend was speaking to me about England. We had both recently come back from England. And she was talking about Australia and what it didn't have, compared to England. And I began talking about what it did have that England hadn't, that you couldn't expect to know the country to have. 'Cause, of course, there are lots of wonderful things, especially in the older parts, but they're not the same, and, of course, the people who came here first... I'm not blaming them for it. But it was so different to anything they'd known, they didn't understand.*

They didn't understand? Fifty years after this interview and after catastrophic fires, floods we can well ask, DO WE UNDERSTAND?

I think we can try. We can think earnestly about what Love of Country means. And to find out what Love is we only need to think of GOD who IS Love.

It seems to me truly significant that the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, begins with the love of God for the whole of his Creation. The very first chapter, Genesis chapter 1 is a wonderful theological statement that God created with LOVE. And God said, it is good. I don't think for one minute that Holy Scripture means us to interpret Good as 'sort of alright, could've been better' or 'we can be selective and say, the long green grass is good but the short brown grass isn't.'

We take seriously our connection with all creation because it is God's creation. In Genesis 1 God said, 'It is GOOD'. When we believe 'It is GOOD', then we view other human beings, the land, the plants and animals, stars moon, the whole lot as GOD'S TREASURES.

There has been, and I guess, will continue to be, a view that other parts of creation are inferior. Dorothea Mackellar is referring to this in the interview above. Even in the twenty-first century many of us are uncomfortable with the 'wide brown land' around us and with sharing that land with its fragile flora and fauna.

The Christian scriptures (the New Testament) has many references to the care of the land and animals. Jesus talked of rescuing donkeys, tending sheep, tilling the soil, considering the flowers of the field. And he talked a lot about greed and abusing others. In reference to the abuse of the earth and things that live therein the principle holds: that these are all created for the use of humankind. Of course human beings have proved their dominance over all, but if God is Love, and we are created in God's image, then we also ought to love what has been given to us to care for.

We have many instances of the abuse of animals by human greed, the desecration of land and sea. Humans can rampage at will because there is no protection against human machinery, explosives and chemicals and firepower. There is abuse, terror and physical harm carried out all over the God's wonderful world where there is no natural defence.

Fires and floods have wrought their own destruction and terror this summer. We are shocked that these elemental forces can beat us. We want to fight back; prove we can win out with all our technology.

**Perhaps we could win out with LOVE. Would it be possible to truly understand and love our Sunburnt country? Can we live in harmony with the plants and creatures which have adapted to the drought and flooding rains? Can we ?**

To fulfil Mothers' Union objectives 4 and 5, members are called upon to promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children and to help those whose family life has met with adversity. In order to do this effectively we first need to understand what can be achieved.

As members of this worldwide, well-respected movement, Mothers' Union has a strong voice and has been successful in bringing about changes which have a positive and lasting impact on communities across the world.

# Choose Wisely

Susan Skowronski

I recently received a bookmark with the Serenity Prayer printed on it and I was reminded of the ‘wisdom’ of those words. Commonly attributed to American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, but possibly much older, this prayer has been used by many and in many ways.

**God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.**

In our own lives there are things we cannot change. Marriages sometimes fail. While a breakup may sadden us, we have no option but to accept that it is beyond our control. We can support the individuals but we cannot change how people feel about each other. People move on.

Similarly, there are things in our society that we cannot change. We live in a multicultural society and there can be no stepping back from that. We need to accept and respect people with different customs and belief systems. Even if we put on our hat and gloves and travel back in time, we would find a society that was not quite the monoculture some seem to think it was. Throughout history, people have always managed to find some differences to highlight.

Having said that, there are many changes that can be achieved. Individuals can make a difference, and 4 million like-minded people are well placed to do so!

It is our responsibility to be an active force for good in our society. Firstly, we need to identify issues where change would bring about an on-going improvement in the lives of our citizens. We need to be realistic and also very clear of the reason we would want changes. Simply deciding that something needs to change because we don’t like it is not good enough. We live in the real world and some things will happen whether we like it or not. There must to be a valid and demonstrable reason to advocate for change.

The Australian Human Rights Commission website provides some information regarding contemporary human rights issues affecting Australians today. The Australian Government website [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au) › [family-and-community](#) › [social-issues](#) provides government information and support services relating to social issues. Some, but not all of the issues which may be of concern to you include:

- Climate change
- Poverty, homelessness and lack of affordable housing
- Gender equality and end to gender violence
- Treatment of asylum seekers
- Aboriginal incarceration
- Lack of government transparency and accountability
- Mental health services and suicide prevention
- Disability rights
- Aged care
- Bullying and harassment
- Obesity

You may feel strongly about these or other issues. I encourage you to use your voice to advocate wisely. Join local campaigns where appropriate. Sign petitions which accurately reflect your own thoughts. Contact your local politician, the relevant Minister or your Premier or the Prime Minister. It is your right and your responsibility to do so.



# The Best We Can Do

Christine Jensen

**I am writing this on New Year's Day 2020. The fires are raging, people are dying and property is being destroyed and each day brings new disasters. It seems that this has been going on for so long, exacerbated of course by the terrible drought.**

Many voices are speaking – those on the ground, describing, reporting, seeking aid, thanking the fire service; those in government offering explanation and leadership; those who are understandably linking this to climate change and calling on us to change our ways.

There are even some Christians who say that the drought and the fires are evidence of the anger of God with our nation over specific sins which we have committed. They would also call on us to change our ways. Repentance is always appropriate, but the Lord has not revealed his specific purposes in allowing these things to happen, and not all catastrophes are a direct result of sin.

As individuals we feel rather powerless. But this is not true.

We can and should personally do all we can to care for the creation. When God created us in his image, our calling involved stewardship of creation, including the animals. We can do this in our own way, and we can encourage those in authority to do the same as a priority.

As Christians, we are also committed to loving our neighbour. In times like these, when many of our neighbours are hurting, it is certainly important to do what we can personally and

through bodies such as Anglicare to help those in need.

But, even if we have little individual say or personal power, there is one thing which we need to do constantly and earnestly for our nation: we need to pray.

We believe that God is in charge of his world. He created it by the word of his power. The Bible tells us that he upholds it moment by moment by his word. The nations are in his hand. History is in his hand. Nature is in his hand.

Jesus told us, ‘Not even a sparrow will fall to the ground apart from your Father’ (Matthew 10:29). God in no way approves sin, but he can overcome it and turn it to his own good purposes. For example, when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, the very people who had sold him as a slave to Egypt, he said to them: ‘And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here. For God sent me before you to preserve life’ (Genesis 45:5).

Even the cross of Jesus was not a defeat for God. Wicked people crucified the Lord of Glory. But God turned it to our salvation.

There are many things we can and should be doing for our community and our nation. But the most important of all is prayer.

Of course, we should always be praying for those in authority, that they will be just and wise and compassionate. We should pray for our nation that there will be peace inside and outside our borders.

But at this time, it is specifically important to pray that the Lord will send rain upon the earth, that he will replenish our land and relieve our farmers and save our animals and supply our great cities.

Sometimes we think that prayer is only for the moment of desperation, when nothing else works. We don’t think of it as a practical solution. But in fact, we should always be praying for our nation and our people, because this is one of the most practical things you can do. It helps fulfil a key AMUA object, that is to help those whose family life has met with adversity.

And, furthermore, you can always pray. Even a person who is confined to bed and elderly can still be very powerful, because God can take and use their prayers to bring great blessing to the community.

And so, as the new decade begins, would it not be a wonderfully practical step for us all to be even more prayerful for the good of our world, and for God’s blessing on our neighbours?

This is the very best thing we can do!



# MYANMAR REVISITED

Christine Brain

Arriving at Yangon International Airport in late December 2019 I expected to feel quite at home. After all, this was my third visit in four years-things couldn't have changed very much, surely? Not so! Shiny new terminal facilities and efficient new procedures were but a foretaste of many other changes in Myanmar, which has emerged from the shadows into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with energy and enthusiasm. There is more traffic, but the streets are cleaner and there are fewer roaming dogs; there are many high-rise buildings under construction; "safety first" signs are everywhere. One which took my eye urged people to "Wear the rash helmet" while riding on a motor cycle (That's not a typo on my part; it really did say 'rash helmet'). The magnificent Colonial-era "Secretariat" building has been renovated and opened to visitors; there seems to be more money being spent on imported goods (I bought Bega cheese and a Riverland orange in the supermarket) and Western dress is worn by many more people, even older women!

This was Beverley Ovens' and my third visit to Myitkyina, the main town in Kachin State, where we were again warmly welcomed. It is a beautiful part of the country, with lovely forests of teak and other timbers, and rich with gold, jade and other minerals and semi-precious stones. The Ayerwaddy (Irrawaddy) River has its headwaters here, before winding its way through the whole country, ending in the Delta area of the south.

Before the conference started we enjoyed a day out, visiting a recreation area on the banks of the river, enjoying lunch at a brand-new semi-open air restaurant set in pretty gardens. We also visited a parish church on the outskirts of the city where parishioners and other interested parties provide accommodation, food and clothing to 13 families who have fled the fighting between the Kachin Independence Army and the Burmese Army. It was the bishop's wife birthday, and she had arranged for a gift of 13 bags of rice to be delivered-enough for each family for about one month.

The conference itself was attended by about 120 women, many of whom were young mothers. They were attentive, with most taking copious notes. I was told that the women appreciate the

fellowship and respite from the hard daily grind of village life which the teaching conferences provide and revel in their increasing ability to contribute to church life and share their Bible knowledge.

The Kachin love music, dance and colour, and we were treated to a feast of all three at a concert and the Sunday service which marked the end of the conference. A wedding in the cathedral meant that we held our sessions on the Saturday morning in the Sunday School hall. Only those used to sitting cross-legged on the floor for three hours could endure it, but they did. Beverley and I were grateful to be given chairs!

Our second conference was in Pyay, in Chin State. This large town, about five hours drive (on good roads) from Yangon is also on the Ayerwaddy River. It is a new diocese, with a youthful and energetic bishop, who visits his scattered parishes by motor-cycle, with his wife sitting side-saddle behind him. The roads aren't good and the terrain is very hilly, so it is quite tiring. While admitting that this is quite challenging at times, he is enthusiastic about the opportunities to share the good news of new life in Christ with others in their region. This time there were about 60 women of all ages present, many of whom had travelled long distances by mini-bus or on the back of a motor-cycle. Again, many women took notes. Some of the women were illiterate, but I was told that they have a great capacity to retain what they have heard. These women also love to sing and learned several new songs very quickly. One particularly lovely song was the Lord's Prayer sung in the local language.

It is always a privilege to share fellowship and to read the Bible with other Christians, and being involved in this ministry to the women of the Anglican Church in Myanmar has been no exception.

Will you join me in praying for Myanmar - for continued growth in both the depth and reach of the church, for a godly response to the rapid rise of wealth which is both helping and harming the nation and for a good outcome in the next election, due late in 2020?



# WHAT'S ON YOUR BOOKSHELF?

Christine Brain

I love to read! Those who know me well will say that this is a gigantic understatement. My favourite outing as a child was to the local library- my friend the librarian sent me home book-less one summer holiday, telling me to go outside and play instead! My bedside cabinet is home to a tower of books in various stages of being read, and having nothing to read leaves me feeling quite lost. Some time ago, while recuperating from surgery, I rediscovered a number of missionary biographies which had sat unread in my bookshelf for many years, and being somewhat desperate for reading matter, I turned my attention to them again. Finding them to be a wonderful source of encouragement has meant that I have now become a crusader for the cause, and in that spirit I offer the following reasons why missionary biographies should form part of a Christian's balanced reading diet.

1. We have many examples in the Bible of 'heroes of the faith' and Hebrews 11 exhorts us to look to such people to be strengthened in our own resolve to follow Jesus more faithfully. As I read of more recent Christian 'heroes of the faith' I am encouraged and my own faith is strengthened. If God equipped others, I can trust that he will equip me to serve him, even if my circumstances are less dramatic.
2. In missionary biographies we are reminded of the difficulties, injustices and superstitions which characterise the lives of gospel-less peoples. This helps us to remember that missionaries have preserved languages, engaged in social and medical reform and freed people from superstition, fear and cruelty as they have heard of and responded to the love of God in Christ.
3. They remind us that God is faithful and provides for his children, often in miraculous ways.
4. They give us examples of obedience to God's call. When we read of others' obedience, and God's faithfulness, we are challenged to remain obedient and faithful ourselves.
5. They record for us examples of God's equipping and God's changing of individuals, which enables them to carry out the work he has called them to do.
6. They encourage us to engage in self-reflection, examining our commitment to Jesus and our response to the dilemmas and difficulties of our own lives.
7. They are usually exciting and interesting to read, and keep us away from "the empty display and false values" of the world of television and other distractions which we so often use to relax with.



We all know the importance of eating a wide variety of nutritious foods if we want to maintain good health. (Remember the old slogan, 'What you eat and drink today walks and talks tomorrow.') We also know that as Christians we need to fill our minds with 'mind' and 'heart' food which will help us to grow spiritually healthy. May I recommend missionary biographies as one readily available, easily digested, source of such food?

Hope is more real when we have known suffering. Hope is more real when we have known what it is to stand on the dark precipice seeing only what has disappeared or been taken away. Hope is more real when we have felt that hope was lost.

## Rediscovering Hope

Rev'd Paul Mitchell

Hope is about opportunity. Hope is about seeing the shoots of what is beginning as the tree fully grown and imagining being in its shade. Hope is about seeing beyond the dry horizon to the rains which will come. Hope is about being comfortable enough with our aloneness that we are able to see what we can offer should relationship be possible again. Hope is about honesty sufficiently deep that we do not wallow in the darkest of our mistakes, foibles and failures but we are able to glimpse the light of forgiveness.

Joy comes in the morning, the psalmist says (Psalm 30), but hope is the glimmer of the touch of dawn reflected above when sun's orb has not yet crested the horizon. Hope reminds us that life is a journey. It is not a destination at which to arrive. It is an invitation into discovery. Christmas, a message to which I have often returned in sermons at that time, is not the end. It is not a destination. It is the beginning of a glimmer of light shining in the darkness. It is a ray of hope which gives us a glimpse of what is still unfolding.

It took a lifetime, albeit a physical life cut short, for Jesus to even begin to enable people to grasp the depth of love in community which helps us to find resilience and to sustain ourselves and our communities. Even during Jesus' life he struggled to enable people to let go of their blinkers of prejudice sufficiently that they would recognise one another as equally valued children of God.

Divisions and prejudice and despair all dissolve our hope. They lead us down into places where we feel alone, embittered, resentful and angry.

Hope, found in the love and light of the child whose birthday we celebrate, reinforces us to climb up and out of despair, to look with fresh eyes, to look beyond the depths of now into the promise of tomorrow.

Rediscover hope in the message of Christ.



**Joy comes  
in the morning**

# Kindness



JOHN CRONSHAW

In the Botanic Gardens in Ballarat, Victoria there is a memorial to an early Australian Poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon, and although you may not know much about the poet, many would know of a stanza from his poem *Ye Weary Wayfarer*

Life is mostly froth and bubble,  
Two things stand like stone.  
Kindness in another's trouble,  
Courage in your own.

The dictionary definition of Kindness tells me that it is the practice or quality of being kind, and it further defines the term kind as having a friendly nature or attitude, considerate to others or humane. Galatians 5:27 lists one of the important qualities of a Spirit focussed life is kindness, along with love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. It is interesting to think about, but I suggest the quality of kindness is always an ‘other person’ centred quality, and can only be realised by being kind to another. Kindness is an extension of love, or an integer of love. It is interesting that when you look at the list of the Fruit of the Spirit, the outward sign of the inward working of God’s grace in our lives, love and kindness are the only two “other person” attributes. The other attributes are inner self qualities. In community the other qualities will make that community more amenable for living, but kindness and love are to be reached out to others.

In Acts 9:32-43 we read of a disciple named Tabitha or Dorcas “who was always doing good and helping the poor.” She died and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. When Peter was called for, we read that the room was filled with grieving widows standing around, showing him the robes and other clothes that Dorcas had made for them. Dorcas had shown kindness to the widows in her community through her skills with a needle and thread. Her goodness and kindness was of an “other person” quality.

Jesus' teaching in Matthew encourages us to remember "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.<sup>41</sup> Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.<sup>42</sup> And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." (Matthew 10:40-42)

I don't want to add to God's word and I don't intend to do so, but I want to take this last verse and split it a little, highlighting the additional words in italics.

And if anyone gives even *a cup of cold water to one of these little ones* who is my disciple,  
And if anyone gives even *a lift to church or Mothers' Union* to one of these little ones who is my disciple,  
And if anyone gives even *a hot meal* to one of these little ones who is my disciple,  
And if anyone gives even *a water the pot plants* to one of these little ones who is my disciple,  
And if anyone gives even *a compliment on a hairstyle or new dress* to one of these little ones who is my disciple,

Kindness is not rocket science. It does not involve years of study or qualifications. It simply involves being on the lookout for any disciple who may be in a situation where a touch of kindness makes all the difference to their day.

In his poem, A Psalm of Life, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow included these words.

#### "A PSALM OF LIFE"

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

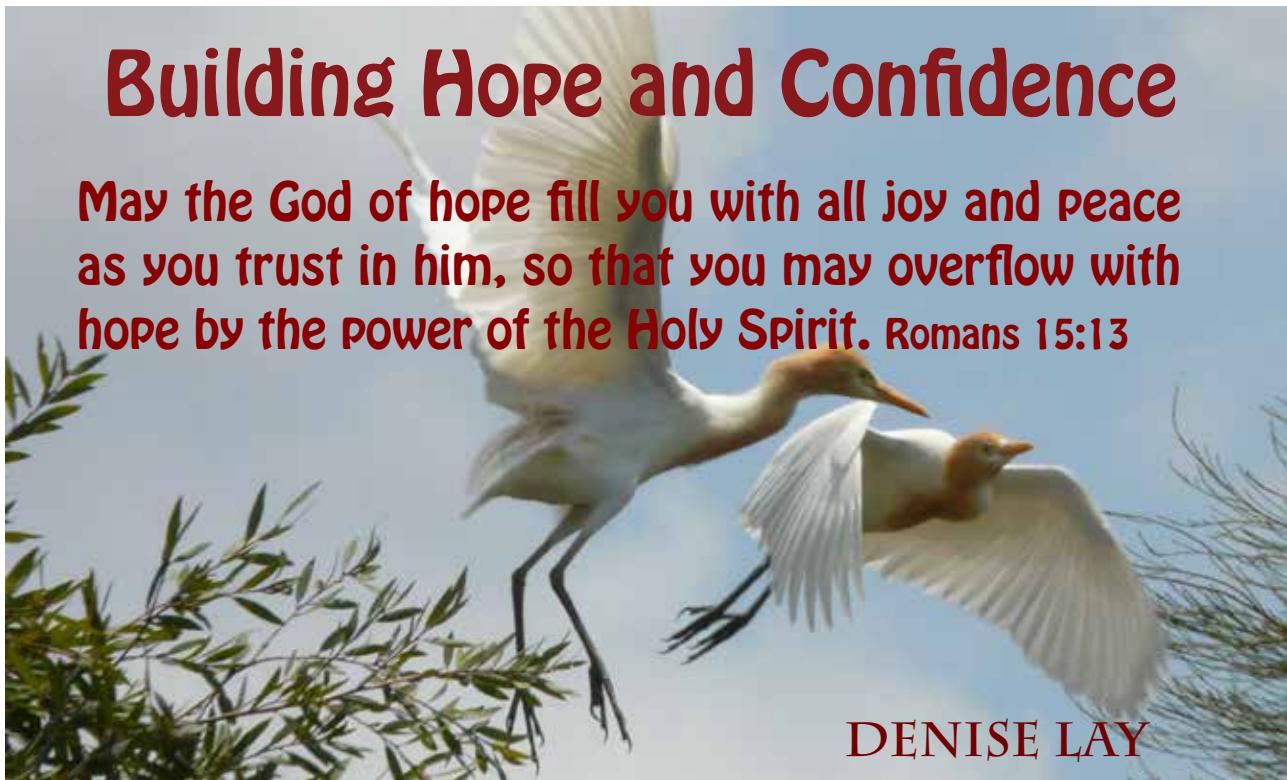
Your kindness may leave a 'footprint on the sand of time' that a forlorn and shipwrecked brother or sister may in seeing and in receiving take heart again.

John Cronshaw  
Buspa

*POSTSCRIPT – Some may object to the inclusion of a secular poem into a Christian message, but I take a lead from the Apostle Paul who, when on the Areopagus on Mars Hill, Athens as recorded in Acts 17 quoted one of the Grecian pagan poets. It is a sad result that Adam Lindsay Gordon, despite his encouraging words about courage in your own troubles committed suicide in 1870.*

# Building Hope and Confidence

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13**



DENISE LAY

I am sure like myself you can remember the lead up to the year 2000. Stories and theories about what could or wouldn't happen at the magic hour of mid-night. For many it was bringing new hopes and expectations. How excited I felt to live in a time, to not only see the start of a new century but also a new millennium.

Having been a Caritas member for a long time, I was admitted to Mothers Union on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2000. A couple of my Caritas friends, who were also Mothers Union, gave me a copy of the Service book and card which said "*welcome each day anew with faith and joy and hope, for it is a gift of God's goodness*".

Here we are now into 2020, the start of a new decade. What lies ahead?

Our Worldwide Mothers Union theme is *Building Hope and Confidence*. What does this mean for you personally or your Branch? While I don't wish to dwell on the negatives, we saw so much devastation as bushfires ravaged many parts of Australia prior and after Christmas. Yet out of this came the outpouring of love and help, not only by offering prayer but support in so many ways to those directly or indirectly affected. During times of adversity, hope must come for better times ahead.

Maybe we even felt challenged in some way to offer more than what we believed we could give. Did you discover something new in yourself?

Even after a time, hope comes as the blackened landscape will once again shoot with the freshness of a new beginning. Mary Sumner saw a great need in the community to help young mothers and their families. From this came the founding of Mothers Union, as she put her trust in God for hope in the future. We continue to share in her hope for Mothers Union beyond 2020.

As members, the hope we can make a difference, through our Christian love and values, to those who have challenges and need in their life. God created us in his own image to love one another as he has loved us.

In Christian friendship and love. *Denise*

# The Prayer of ‘Daily Examen’

from St. Ignatius Loyola

A great way to pray is to look for God’s presence in your life. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God’s presence and to discern his direction for us. Here is a version of St. Ignatius’s prayer:



**1. Become aware of God’s presence.** Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

**2. Review the day with gratitude.** Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day’s gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

**3. Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius’s great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you could reach out to this friend in some way.

**4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God sees as particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether in intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

**5. Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to give you light for tomorrow’s challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what’s coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God’s guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Lord’s Prayer.

Take time out to work through this ancient form of quiet reflection over your day. It may take 15 to 20 minutes. Don’t feel a need to rush through it.

# AMUA SUPPORTS 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

## ... in BUNDABERG (Brisbane Diocese)

On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 9.30am the Church Bells of Christ Church rang out 84 times, announcing the commencement of the 16 days global campaign, and representing the countries in which Mothers Union serves. A Prayer Service followed with an encouraging number across the community gathering to pray and to hear from the Coordinator of EDON Place, local Women's Shelter, speaking on the work being done in our community. This was followed by the lightening of candles to remember all who are affected by gender- based violence and as a symbol of hope.

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> 6pm. The Good Shepherd Anglican Parish showed their support by hosting a dinner at which the Service Director of EDON Place spoke and further enlightened us on the needs for support against gender- based violence in our community. Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December the bells rang out again from Christ Church announcing the final day of the campaign and the commencement of another prayer gathering with prayers, the lightening of candles and Speaker an Ex Policeman from the Vulnerable Persons Unit.

During the 16 days a Prayer Tree was displayed in the church giving people an opportunity to pray and write a prayer. The event was well advertised across the churches and community and we were encouraged by the response and look forward to repeating a similar event each year.

Bev Perry.

## ... and in Rockhampton Diocese

The parishes with MU branches marked the 16 Days of Activism in 2019 with Prayer Trees in their churches on which parishioners were urged to hang prayers for victims, perpetrators, children; in fact, anyone affected by or involved in Gender Violence. The prayers were offered during intercessions at the end of the period.

One parish took their tree to the town Christmas Tree Festival organised by their parish to raise awareness in the wider community. As well, members pack toiletries for the local Women's Shelter.

Pictures show St Paul's Cathedral members holding the bags of toiletries, and the contents.

Noelle Frazer



# NEWS FROM PERTH

News from **Bassendean Branch**, one of the smaller Branches in Perth is really encouraging, although they are low in numbers, the members still meet monthly. In keeping with the theme they have continued with Bible Studies, upgraded their Notice Board in the Church for the local competition, hosted an Area Meeting and a Cyber Parenting Workshop together with Midland and Guildford Branches.

They hosted an Afternoon Tea to welcome Bishop Jeremy to his new position as MU Perth Diocesan Chaplain. Members attended the Lady Day Service and Festival, The Quiet Day and Council Meetings.

When the North West Diocesan Conference was held in Perth they made biscuits and slices, along with other branches, for the North West group and two members attended the final Friday afternoon tea. This gave them the opportunity to meet with their Parish Partners from Broome.



Members are also very involved in the Church work, Rosters etc. and still meet to worship, pray and act out their objects. They are very involved in Mainly Music for young families.

**Carine / Duncraig Branch** celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday with other members of the Perth Diocese, with a Eucharist Service presided over by Rev. Ross Kilpatrick, the retiring MU Chaplain. This was followed by a lunch prepared by the Branch ladies and enjoyed by everyone. Mrs. Judy Lundie gave an interesting and entertaining talk about the history of the Branch following lunch.

**Warnbro Branch** had a very exciting time by admitting six new members at one time, an unprecedented event. This event took place during the Morning Service presided over by Rev. David Lord, the Rector of St. Brendan's By The Sea. The ladies were Muriel O'Donnell, Patricia Cotton, Kirstine MacDonnel, Estelle Cairncross, Fisista Likioso and Joyce Yogo who were each presented with their Certificates and Badges by the President to Warnbro Branch. I feel sure Warnbro Branch must be the envy of the Diocese with such popular membership. This was followed by a celebratory morning tea.

Anne Herring

AUTUMN 2020/ 23

# Brisbane AMUA Executive Fun & Fellowship



Brisbane Diocesan Executive are very grateful Archbishop Phillip and Dr Christa Aspinall invited us into their home for the final executive meeting for 2019 and our Christmas luncheon. We give a special thanks to Christa and Archbishop Phillip for their kind hospitality and continued support of Mothers' Union, for their prayers and their friendship.



Above: Bev Perry thanks Dr Christa Aspinall

Below: Party hats and silly jokes



The meeting acknowledged the life and work of Helen Barrett MBE AO who on 6 June 2018 received her 70 years badge in recognition of her years of service and promoting MU in the Solomon Islands, Torres Strait and Brisbane Diocese. Helen who passed from this life into God's Kingdom on 25 November is remembered as a faithful servant of Christ and untiring supporter of Mothers' Union.

President Bev Perry spoke of her experience in attending Australian Council in November and passed on information, motions and decisions made during the Council.

There were two proposals from clergy recommending families for this year's family holiday. A family from last year was not able to take their holiday as their child continued regular treatment all year. It was decided to support the two applicants for this year, as well as the family from last year with family holidays. Funds were also approved for a donation to support those affected by the drought.

Business was concluded before members of executive were joined by special guests for fun, fellowship and fabulous food.

# MU Keiraville 70 years serving Jesus

MU Keiraville celebrated 70 years of serving in the local Wollongong area at the St John's monthly family service in October 2019. It was significant to mark this special milestone with the admission of new member, Kathy Watson by Rector, Rev. John Reed and MU Keiraville President, Roslyn Lawer.

We were very pleased Wendy Mayer, MU Sydney President, could be present at the special celebration service and to have her cut the birthday cake.

As families gathered around the morning tea table with children running about and adults chatting it was a wonderful reminder of the ministry of caring for families by MU Keiraville for such a long time. Soon the old church hall will be demolished and a new building go up in its place, seeking to better reach out into the local community. MU Keiraville looks forward to building on the legacy of the past 70 years and under God continuing its ministry to the families of St John's and our neighbourhood well into the future.



## Craft Night in Bendigo



### Felt Objects

Recently the Caritas ladies of South East Bendigo Holy Trinity had a craft night. They had lots of fun, fellowship and cups of tea as they sewed these felt objects that will be put in care packages for women fleeing domestic violence.

- Lois Morrissey

### No Sew Polar Fleece Rug

2 Pieces of polar fleece same size  
Snip 12 cm snips on all four sides of each piece of fleece  
Join the two pieces together by tying them



# An Unexpected Journey

When two of us, both on the Grafton Diocese Executive of MU, set out from home in Alstonville to make a two- and half-hour trip down to Coffs Harbour for an end of year meeting, we had no idea that God had something different in mind. Due to bushfire threat, I ensured my car was topped up with fuel, oil, and water and that my tyres were at correct pressure. Later, I was thankful that I had done so.

After a 7am start, we had planned a picnic morning tea stop at a lovely park in Ulmara, overlooking the Clarence River, but of course, as we had driven all the way in smoke haze, the view was almost obscured. Two ladies at the park stopped to chat and as they were offering religious texts we happily took one, agreeing in passing, that 'the bible was indeed our guide'.

After our Executive Meeting, thanks and gratitude were expressed, on behalf of all members of the Executive, to Sandra Chambers for her three years as President, for her dedication to the work of MU and to the on-going growth of the movement worldwide through her enthusiasm and promotion of MULOA.

As lunch was concluding, notification was received that the Pacific Highway was now closed between Grafton and Ballina and the only slightly longer alternate route, Summerland Way, was also closed. Our only way home was to be a very long detour via the Gwydir Highway — an additional four hours of driving!



As we approached Grafton, northbound traffic was being directed towards Glen Innes, 145km away! Neither of us had been on this inland route for almost twenty years and we had forgotten how ruggedly beautiful and at times sweeping the views can be, and how few homes were to be seen along this way. We soon noticed that we had a small 'caravan' of 'refugees' making this long, long detour with us, and we were pleased to have their company on these otherwise rather empty country roads.

We did become a little concerned as we crossed the Gibraltar Range, when we could see billowing smoke much thicker than the general smokiness and threatening the presence of a new fire outbreak. We were also conscious of the need to make the descent from the Great Dividing Range, down its many twists and turns, before total darkness fell. We wondered what our families would think if they had known we were in the midst of bushfires, with darkness coming on and a long twisting descent ahead of us! We were glad neither of us had told them of our long journey to Coffs Harbour.

As we drove through many kilometres of burnt out bushland, we were amazed that it had often been blackened right up to the bitumen while the other side of the road was untouched, no doubt due to the saving work of fire-fighters. We felt and prayed for all those facing fire threats, dealing with the devastation of property and stock losses and for those battling for so many weeks to control these fires. We continue to pray for all who have been affected by these terrible fires.

By the time we made our last stop at 9.00pm at Casino, we had a sense of great relief we'd made it this far and were actually 'nearly there'. We finally arrived home at 10.30pm. God had taken us on a most unexpected journey, showed us first-hand what being near bush fire really means, and had brought us safely home after a journey, both ways, totalling over 800km!

Gerri White and Joyce Shepherd (MU Alstonville Branch)

# The path to renewed hope... returning home...

The road less travelled through now dry and parched lands brings a certain sadness as one remembers. Rolling hills once lush and alive now burnt and brownish grey. A glimpse of green quickens the heart. Trees and roadside grass still flicker with life. Animals once grazing happily on lush green fields, now rest or stand quietly searching for a touch of green. The promise of rain builds in white and grey billowing clouds. A dawning mare's tail has foretold the ensuing gift. How can it be; the river here is all but dry? Suddenly a little reprieve. This place has had rain. Recent Rain. Hope glimmers on the horizon. Can it be? Hovering over the mountain, dark clouds are building. The nearer we get the clearer we see. Yes, indeed, rain clouds. A sigh, a smile, a heart filled with glee. Heartfelt thanks are offered in prayer. What a blessing! Our thirsting lands will rejoice in the cool, refreshing, life-giving rains. Yes, it is raining! Misty mountains confirm its presence. Gentle, embracing rain falls on Gods own precious lands. Memories awaken deep within my very soul. Many times, we have walked, danced and given thanks for the beauty that saves and allows re-creation to take hold. Home. We give thanks and with renewed hope we know; all will be well. 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.' How blessed we are. The reign continues...



Evie Rennick

## ATTENTION

### DIOCESAN AND BRANCH PRESIDENTS

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The Producer: Sandra Chambers.**

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# *Pause 4 Poetry*

## High Summer

Deeper into the year Jacarandas  
begin to shed their blossoms,  
create a brilliant lilac carpet,  
adorn footpaths and gardens.  
The springtime sparkle has lost its lustre;  
sharp early noises of the city,  
now echo monotonous, indistinct.

Among giants of concrete,  
humid air hangs like deflated balloons.  
Nature settles down to lazy days,  
takes on duller, darker shades  
while mornings reluctantly wake to heat.  
Trees and gardens lie dry and still,  
a water dragon runs across the road.

Mocco Wollert

## OUTBACK BOUND

Journeying westward  
along a shimmering black ribbon  
snaking towards the horizon

Tumbleweed rolling... rushing... scurrying  
dodges speeding trucks  
dawdling caravans  
and occasional roos.

Wedgetail pauses its feasting  
rises slowly, languid and graceful  
on powerful wings  
glides towards the sun

Susan Skowronski

## The Light

7pm

Outside on the front verandah  
in the winter's cold,  
I watch large and small  
moths drawn to the glow  
of the outdoor light.  
They dance around  
the golden bulb,  
to finally rest inside  
the light fitting in stillness  
and peaceful meditation -

it makes me ponder how  
humans and animals  
are drawn to the light  
of loving kindness -  
love, a Spiritual  
lamp of warmth imbuing  
the receiver with inner strength,  
to endure the challenges  
of this world

Sarah Muller

# Dulcia domestica

Some of the most revealing clues about the culinary preferences of the ancient Romans can be found in a single cookbook, *De re coquinaria* ('On the subject of cooking') compiled in the late fourth or early fifth century AD.

One of the easiest recipes from the book to recreate is a dessert known as 'dulcia domestica', which translates as 'a home-made sweet' involves stuffing dates with nuts and stewing them in red wine infused with honey. The addition of salt and pepper may seem strange at first, but the contrast between the sweet and savoury flavours works surprisingly well.

Difficulty: 2/10 Time: 10 minutes

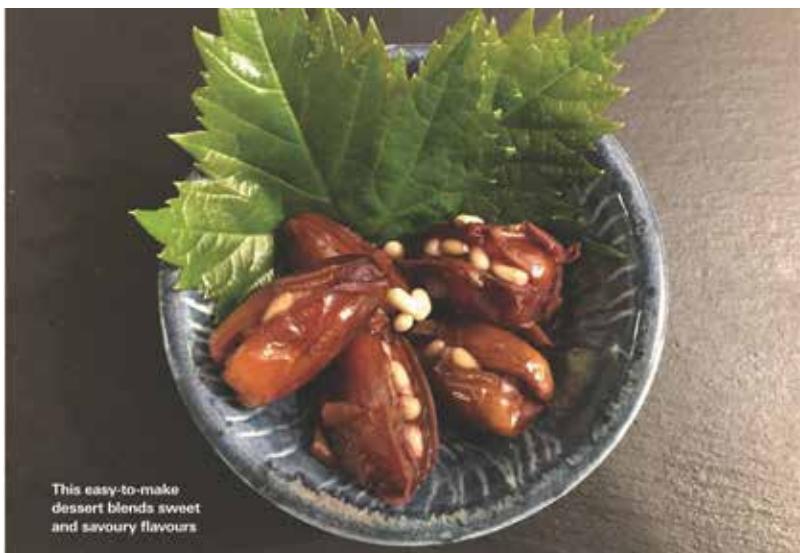
## INGREDIENTS

200g fresh or dried dates  
50g ground nuts or pine kernels  
Red wine  
3 tbsp honey  
Salt and ground pepper to taste

## METHOD

Remove the stones from the dates and stuff each one with a handful of nuts or pine kernels.

Sprinkle the fruit with salt and pepper, and place in a saucepan with 3 tbsp of honey and enough red wine to cover them (we recommend skewering the dates with a toothpick beforehand to prevent the nuts from falling out). Simmer on a low heat for five minutes or until the skins start to peel away. Remove the toothpicks and serve immediately.



The lifeblood of Mothers' Union is the commitment, faith and compassion of its members and friends.

Generations of women and men have invested in Mothers' Union, so that today it is healthy, alive and growing. Now the future is in our hands



'like a tree planted by water, with roots that reach deep by the stream...' Jeremiah 17.8

Legacies can make a lasting difference to MU Australia's future. To find out how you can include us in your Will, you can contact:

**MU Australia,**  
Marilyn Robey,  
Australia Council Secretary,  
8 Darwin Drive,  
Bathurst NSW 2795  
email [muaustsecretary@telstra.com](mailto:muaustsecretary@telstra.com)



# RECIPES

## MARIAN'S SUPER CHERRY SHORT CAKE

60 g Castor Sugar  
60 g Lard {mostsupermarketsstock}  
Mix well together  
Add 2 eggs  
30 g Breadcrumbs  
125 g Plain Flour  
1 Teaspoon Baking Powder  
1 Tablespoon RUM or similar

Sift baking powder and flour together then combine all ingredients and put in a 9 inch cake tin. Take numerous (depends on size) cherries, scatter over the top.  
Bake in hot oven for 15 min decreasing to mod oven for 20 mins

## CHOCOLATE CAKE

125 gms butter (melted)  
1/4 cup cocoa  
1 cup S R Flour (heaped)  
1 cup sugar (bare)  
1/2 cup milk  
2 eggs  
vanilla

Add melted butter to all other ingredients. Beat hard with mixer for 3 minutes. Pour into tin and bake in moderate oven for 35 minutes.

*This cake can be made plain, orange, lemon or otherwise, just add more flour in place of cocoa.*

## CHEESE CRISPS

Grated desired amount of parmesan cheese and put teaspoonful heaps on a greased or baking paper lined tray, allowing room for them to spread. Bake for 8 – 10 minutes in 200 deg oven and allow to cool and harden on the tray.

Contributions to this page would be greatly appreciated.

## RAISIN LOAF

1 Cup Raisins  
1 Cup Water  
1 egg  
Pinch salt

1 Cup Sugar  
1 tbs butter  
2 cups SR flour  
1 level tsp carb soda

Boil Raisins, sugar and water together for 3 minutes. Take off stove and stir in butter. Allow to cool. Then add well beaten egg. Slowly add flour, salt and Carb Soda. Bake slowly for a good hour.

## LOVERS' CHOC CAKE

1/3 cup prunes, stoned and chopped  
1/4 cup Drambuie\*  
3 eggs separated  
2/3 cup castor sugar  
125 gr unsalted butter, softened  
200gr dark chocolate, chopped, melted \*\*  
3/4 cup plain flour  
3/4 cup pecans, chopped onto large pieces

\*Soak prunes in Drambuie or other spirit eg brandy for about an hour -if non alcoholic desired use orange juice

Beat egg yolks and sugar until they are pale and light. Whisk the softened butter into the melted chocolate

\*\*To melt put choc into microwave give 2 mins, check, a bit more 1.30? Fold into yolk mixture, THEN fold in flour, pecans and soaked prunes

Bake in buttered lined cake tin in the centre of a 200 degree oven for **Exactly 24 mins**. Cool before turning out

Recipes supplied by members of MU group at St Dunstan's Camberwell in Melbourne Diocese. Thank you to Charmain Wright for the contribution

# HUGE STOCKTAKE SALE

## AUSTRALIA PUBLICATION CATALOGUE

Previous year's **Christmas cards.**

**Mothers Union items** ... key rings ... mugs ... jam and sugar spoon plate knife ... Shine Baptism cards ... Marriage Kits ... navy and royal jackets and vests ... post it notes ... A6 note pads ... *Midday Prayer* bookmark ... *MU Prayer* bookmark ... *Prayer for MUA* bookmark ... *Prayers in time of illness* ... *Prayer for the family* card ... **Books** ... Programme Planning ... Communication Skills ... *Hello God* ... *A history of MU in Australia* ... *Mary Sumner and the MU* ... *Fair enough* ... *Tackling Torment* ... *We are created by God*-discussion book and Leader's book ... fridge magnets - *Things I must do today!* and *Sharing Christ's love* ... MU Postcard.

**Stationery items** ... non-religious blank sympathy cards ... *The 23rd Psalm* and *Footprints* thinking of you cards ... non-religious blank thinking of you card ... non-religious blank thank you card ... non-religious blank get well card ... non-religious boys & men pack of 8 assorted birthday cards ... correspondence cards-pack of 8 ... wildflower notepaper ... prayer cards-pack of 5 pass it on cards-pack of 10 assorted bookmarks.

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Narelle

