

MIA *mia*

SPRING 2021

ANGLICAN
MOTHERS UNION
AUSTRALIA

Rebuilding hope and confidence



ISSN 1326-7701



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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.

MIAmia

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Mia Mia is an Aboriginal word for 'home'.

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Have your say in Mia Mia

Suggestions, comments, contributions
and insights are welcome.

Please send all correspondence
to the editor.

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Meet Our Contributors



Rev'd Tim Watson moved to Australia from the UK in 2019 to become Rector of Holy Cross, Hackett, in the diocese of Canberra-Goulburn. Formerly a university

history lecturer, he spent 10 years in France as a member of a new, ecumenical, religious community before being ordained in 2011. For 5 years Tim was a member of the Church of England's Advisory Council on Relations between Bishops and Religious Communities. His wife Kate is Australian and they have two children, Daniel and Susanna.



Bishop Jeremy James, youngest of 3 sons, was born in a dairy-cattle and wheat-growing area of SW England. His parents were practising Anglicans. In 1986 he emigrated to

Port Hedland to work for the Mission to Seafarers. +Jeremy was ordained in 1988 to a curacy in the central wheatbelt of WA. Jeremy and Lynne were married in 1993, and continued rural ministry before moving to a coastal parish and then a new area parish in the northern suburbs of Perth, where they served for 8 years. Their next appointment was to a parish with many Jewish and Muslim neighbours. Jeremy enjoys bird-watching and creative writing. Bishop Jeremy was consecrated in 2014 and currently serves as an assistant bishop for the northern region, Diocese of Perth, and as the chaplain for MU, Perth.

Prayer

O Lord God, our times are in your hands. Be our strength as we grow more frail and weary in life. Mercifully give us your perfect peace in our anxieties, the knowledge of your presence with us in our weariness and poor health, and the comfort of your everlasting arms enfolding us, day by day. Amen

*Marion Dallison in 'Dear Lord...'
Mothers Union, 2018 Used by permission*

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From the Editor's desk

The theme for this issue, 'Rebuilding hope and confidence', reflects AMUA's desire to put the uncertainties and challenges of the past 18 months behind us and to look with confidence to the future. Some may feel that this is forlorn hope, with Covid 19 continuing to cause havoc and distress in Australia and worldwide. I hope that you will be encouraged by Bishop Jeremy James' testimony of finding hope following the death of his wife, Lynne and by the contributions of our regular writers, as well as lots of good news from around the dioceses.

The annual '16 days of activism against gender-based violence' campaign will take place again during November and December. If you are looking for ways to include this in your MU calendar you may find ideas in our special report on page 18. Ben Boland and Tim Watson challenge us to think creatively about our ministry to the elderly and families, and John Cronshaw and Virginia Grice remind us that Jesus both understands and can help us in our time of need or weakness. If you enjoy this issue of *Mia Mia* you may be able to share it with someone else in need of encouragement.

Yours in the fellowship of Mothers Union,

Christine

MIA MIA is available on CD

When your eyesight starts to diminish all is not lost!

All articles in the *Mia Mia* magazine are faithfully recorded for your entertainment and enjoyment. All you need is a small CD player and MU news from around Australia will be at your fingertips.

For further information contact your Branch Treasurer.



A word from our President

Re-building hope and confidence – oh, how badly we need to do this in our local and global world! After nearly 2 years of uncertainty due to Covid-19, and with the threat of new outbreaks with every news bulletin, we have become very indecisive. Should I meet with friends? Do I have my mask with me? How far can I travel? Who's going to the shop today? When will we be able to celebrate that special event? When can we go to MU and church?

So, our theme for 2021 touches all of us. How can we rebuild hope and confidence in ourselves and in those we meet each day? The first action we must take is to **pray for our world** and for the elimination of the virus, giving thanks to God for medical and scientific research. The second action is to **have the vaccination**, not just for our benefit, but for the people around us at home, in care and those we pass in the supermarket. The third action is to **believe** that we will make it through the pandemic as a country and globally.

Another action we can take is to **advocate** on behalf of countries that can't afford to purchase the vaccine for their people. Recently, in Cambodia, a young man in his mid-thirties survived in the ICU ward in hospital because an Australian sponsor paid AUD \$440.00 per day for his medicine – far above what the young man could afford on an hourly rate of pay equivalent to AUD \$6.25. Write to politicians around the country, asking them to encourage equitable sharing and generosity to those countries in need. Everyone, not just the wealthy or lucky, must be vaccinated, or Covid-19 will be with us for years.

So, be hopeful for the future and be confident. Buy your AMUA Diary, fill it with all your important dates for the coming year. Have confidence that, with the Holy Trinity beside us, we can still achieve much through AMUA. Seek out those members who have become isolated, offer to collect them and bring them to gatherings. Plan the Advent Service, the Christmas break-up and the program for next year – prepare to be flexible, meeting each challenge as it comes and is overcome!

Mothers' Union members have always looked towards the future. This year is the 100th anniversary of the death of our founder, Mary Sumner. She couldn't have foreseen that what began as a gathering of women in her lounge-room would grow to become the strong movement it is today – but I'm sure that she would approve of the directions being taken in the 21st century, as we seek to end violence, poverty and injustice for families, not only in our own community, but globally as well. Her vision and work are being developed and carried on through our actions, underpinned by the constant prayer of 4 million members today, and countless millions of members over our 145 year history.

We are rebuilding hope and confidence through Mothers' Union and you are an integral part of this movement!

TRAVELLING PLAQUE RECOGNISES 60 YEARS

Members of the St James AMUA group at Wyong, on the NSW Central Coast, will soon celebrate their 60th Anniversary. Congratulations on your years of prayer and encouragement in your community!

To acknowledge this milestone, a 'Travelling Plaque' was created by Rick Howes, husband of MU member, Barbara Howes, who presented the

plaque to the Wyong Branch. The plaque, crafted from Tasmanian Oak, is to be passed on to other AMUA branches as they celebrate their 60th year. A small plaque records each group's name and a book accompanies the Travelling Plaque, with the history of each branch being recorded before it moves on to the next group. All this is presented in a special carrying case.

We thank Rick for putting his creative skills into making this 'Travelling Plaque' for AMUA.

If your branch is coming up to their 60th year, please contact your Diocesan President for details about how to participate in the 'Travelling Plaque' initiative. This is a wonderful opportunity to promote AMUA, and tourism around Australia.

Anne Kennedy



Did you know that MU stands up against Gender Based Violence on the world stage?

The United Nations has launched a series of Action Coalitions to generate real improvements in Gender Justice over the next 5 years. Mothers' Union has been accepted as a "commitment maker", specifically for the action "to adapt and scale up evidence driven prevention programming for the elimination of GBV against women and girls in all their diversity". In addition, MU has signed a communique from some 30 faith-based organisations.

*July e-News and Updates
from Mary Sumner House,
used by permission*





A hope that is sure and certain

I wonder what comes to your mind when you hear the word 'hope'? I find myself often saying 'I hope you're feeling better', 'I hope this lockdown ends soon', 'I hope that cake turns out', 'I hope the car starts.' There is an endless list, but that kind of hope is often uncertain and is really only mere wishful thinking, or optimism. But is hope ever certain, firm and secure?

We all know how uncertain the future is, and so it all depends on who or what we have hope in, doesn't it? Christian hope is solid because it's based on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not mere optimism. One reason for this is that knowing the Lord gives us a hope and confidence based on his promises. In the face of suffering and pain, or even the agony of guilt and shame, we know what the Lord requires of us, and we know that he welcomes us and smiles at us. All this is summed up in his promises.

Promises are funny things, aren't they? So often the word itself is a cause of cynicism or laughter. We know what promises are so often worth – namely, nothing at all.

People make a promise, invite us to have confidence in them and then squander our trust when they never keep their word. A promise is only as good as the person who gives it. And yet we keep making and accepting promises. They are a key part of what we have to give us any confidence in the future. We all recognise how uncertain the future is; we cannot tell whether our lives will be long or short, whether our income will fail, whether friends will betray us or turn against us. A promise is a sort of insurance against the future, giving us confidence that we can go forward with hope.

That is why marriage is built on solemn and public promises. Love speaks these promises so that we can enter such an important relationship, one that may last sixty years or more, and one that will assuredly contain many difficulties as well as the potential for much joy, with confidence and hope.

God is a promise-making God. When we turn to him and entrust ourselves to him, it is on the basis of his words to us, words on which we can rely all our lives long, to the very end. 'Come to me' says Jesus, 'all those who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' (Matthew 11:28-30).

These last long months have been dispiriting and difficult for many of us. How can we rebuild confidence? How can we have hope in any sort of future when we don't really know how long it will all last?

When we have confidence in Jesus and hope for the future based on his promises, we are not spared suffering and troubles and pandemics. But our confidence in Jesus's trustworthiness gives us the resource to deal with them. Always, even when one day we face death itself, we can know that we are not alone, that the Good Shepherd is walking with us every day. And he is the one who loves us so much that he gave his life for us at the cross.

The other night I had another reminder of the presence of the Lord. I had some discouraging news; something I had attempted to do had failed and there was some criticism involved as well. I have to say that I was feeling despondent.

And then, a few moments after the bad news, came an email. It was late at night, when you would have expected most people to be asleep. It was from a friend for whom I have been praying this last decade. In the email he told me a wonderful story about a family rescued from drugs and worse, a family which has now begun to walk with hope and confidence in the promises of God.

It was an answer to my prayers, and a reminder that the Lord will never leave us or forsake us. It was a great encouragement to keep trusting the promises of our never-failing God!

Christine Jensen

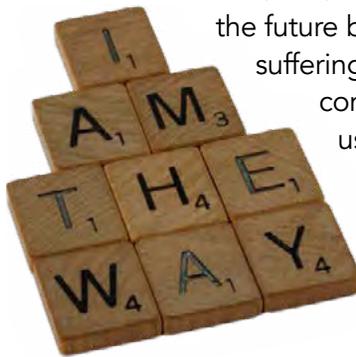


Photo credit: Brett Jordan on Unsplash



Rebuilding hope and confidence

Romans 12:12 '...rejoicing in hope; enduring in troubles; continuing steadfastly in prayer.'

At the time of preparing this, here in Victoria we have again been through another time of lockdown. Although mostly affecting metropolitan Melbourne, this does have a flow-on effect across all communities. As well, we have seen devastation in many areas of Victoria following gale force winds, storms and floods. People have shown so much resilience; not only here but across Australia, and indeed the world, over the past 18 months. However, all this has taken a toll on people in their daily lives, whether personally or professionally, causing stress, anxiety and worry. Losing loved ones and dealing with serious illness hasn't stopped, but in many instances, has increased. Many of us need to *rebuild hope and confidence* because until we do, how can we help others within our circle of family and friends, our church and the wider community?

As members of Mothers Union, we can be inspired by our founder, Mary Sumner. She, along with many past members, also endured times of adversity along with the good. Often, challenging moments can be positive. In the face of adversity, we learn more about ourselves, discovering our strengths and weaknesses. And, when we start to recover, we take those discoveries and apply them to our life and work, improving ourselves, our interests and the organisations we are involved with.

One of my favourite television programs has been the series *Restoration Australia*, which is about restoring derelict heritage properties, including miners' cottages, old churches, mansions and ordinary homes. It takes a great deal of passion, patience, research, knowledge and inspiration, even prayer (not forgetting, also a good budget), to return these buildings to their former glory. The people who take on the responsibility of these projects do have a gift, firstly to recognise the potential in these old buildings, and then to undertake as much of the restoration work as possible. This series sometimes reminds me of Jesus, who was a carpenter and may have spent his

days building and repairing houses, and perhaps even pasture fences, as well as making simple tools and implements, having been taught the trade by his father, Joseph.

Each of us has a gift and talent and it is important we use them to successfully rebuild ourselves as a Branch and Diocese, by firstly setting small goals, then building to bigger ones. It is important we grow and develop for the future of Anglican Mothers Union in Australia.

Many will recall from our Sunday School days the song based on the parable of the 'Wise and foolish builders', where the wise man built his house upon the rock and the foolish man built his house upon the sand. The foolish builder didn't think enough or want to listen to others. He just wanted to build a house, and didn't ensure that what he was doing stood on a firm foundation. The wise builder, however, carefully planned, investigated and listened so he could build with confidence, knowing what he built would be strong and last for a long time. We can live and build our lives, including helping those around us, with confidence and strength when we live according to the word of God. It is not just about listening or talking but is also about doing good.

For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9

In Christian love and blessings.

Denise Lay



Photo credit: Priscilla du Preez on unsplash



The spiritual advantages of winter sales and op shops

When it comes to being wise and forward-thinking, the winter sales are great for Christmas shopping. Op shops work the same way; in fact, they can be year-round venues for collecting special gifts and giving yourself a recycling star into the bargain. Not only can you save money, but you are also giving yourself *time credits* for the weeks before Christmas. The importance of preparation is built in to our church calendar. Advent does not need, least of all deserve, to be the poor cousin of Lent – most especially in our times. Of the two great Christian festivals, Easter and Christmas, Christmas is the one most fraught with expectations and the most abused in society.

With a quieter and more purposeful Advent (having the shopping stored ready for wrapping – at the least) we can perhaps examine the dilemmas: what do we think or know our families expect of us? Is it right to expect something of them? We are, after all, professing Christ. Is attending Christ's Mass our priority? Do we need to make some changes to our pattern? Perhaps we have been too unyielding in what we want, perhaps we have not had enough courage to say what we want to do? A Christian Christmas is too full of possibilities to be overshadowed by any barbecue or roast ritual. For that reason, it seems appropriate to ponder its complexities and simplicities.

Let's start with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, with the children emerging from the wardrobe and entering a place (Narnia) under the thrall of the wicked White Witch, a place where it is *always winter and never Christmas*. In danger and darkness, hiding with the Beavers, the children hear the jingling of bells. "'Come on!'" cried Mr Beaver, who was almost dancing with delight. "Come and see! This is a nasty knock for the Witch! It looks as if her power is already crumbling." ... And then they saw a sledge, and reindeers with bells on their harness and on it sat a person everyone knew the moment they set eyes on him.' (p. 100-101).

So, who was it who heralded the beginning of a New Age in C.S. Lewis's allegorical children's book? It is Father Christmas! C.S. Lewis is saying that for most people their first glimpse of Christ's generous power as children is Father Christmas. Father Christmas is the antidote to 'What I want

for Christmas is...'. What a wealth of tales there are around St Nicolaus of Myra. Even today, my 10-year-old friend, Nicolas, knows that Father Christmas was real; a bishop whose generosity became legendary, and it is in this generous spirit that we observe Christmas.

Generosity at Christmas has been the subject of songs, books for adults as well as children and carols such as *Good King Wenceslas*. It, too, is based on a real person of whom was written, that, *rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty, so much so that he was considered, not a prince, but the father of all the wretched.*

And who hasn't heard of Charles Dickens' famous story, *A Christmas Carol*, with Scrooge caught in a life-and-death struggle with the love of money. Whenever the carols are sung, Santa given his rightful heritage, and we tell the story of Scrooge, we could say that the power of disbelief, cruelty and meanness is already crumbling. In the same way, when we put the Christmas Bowl in the centre of the table, send cards with both loving intention and a depiction of the Nativity or play carols on a device, we are creating our narrative: a narrative of our Christian life that is linked back and back and back through the centuries to the Gospel.

That is why it is so necessary, so important, that we are not engulfed by the whirlwind that engulfs life even before Advent begins. Ignoring it, scorning it – these aren't options for Christians celebrating the coming of God into a fallen, broken world – 'for God so loved the world'. Most people stay inside when there's a storm, so that is an option. Choose a minimum of pre-Christmas parties and take that saved time to *be still*. Listen to your carols, sing along with the children. Read more about our generous ancestors of faith.

On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day go to church with the children. Do it confidently. Let others do the cooking. Be very, very happy because God's coming and taking human form is overwhelming generosity and magnificent humility.

Lesley McLean

A brief guide to Mothers Union UK website

(www.mothersunion.org)



Finding your way around websites can be challenging at times. The Mothers' Union UK and Worldwide website has a bounty of ideas which you might find helpful and are just a few clicks away.

Search for mothersunion.org in your browser

The Home Page greets you.

Across the top you will find these headings:

What we do, Get Involved, Our story, Resources, Faith and prayer, News

These sections will give you a wider picture of Mothers Union.

But first **Scroll** down the **Home** page and you will see current articles of interest, some ways to get involved and then finally a world map which shows countries where Mothers' Union exists – it's all so encouraging. You can click on each dot on the map and it will tell you about the diocese, how many members there are in that diocese and the number of their projects.

BUT if you want to know what the projects are you'll need to log in. Click on [I can't login, please help](#). You then fill in your details and you will be emailed when they're verified.

Go back up to the top of the Home page and click on **Resources**

You will find answers to all your questions and many ideas for your diocese and branch. There are over 9 pages of resources available. You will never be short of ideas!

There are colouring sheets, ways to connect and support your communities, 'Thinking of You' cards to download, simple knitting for a beginner (a mug



cosy), a daily activity tracker, a daily devotional and gratitude diary, exercise suggestions, articles on how to 'Zoom' using a computer or by phone, the transcript of the 9 lessons and carols service, 2020 (and a link to the service on YouTube), a '16 Days of Activism' suggested program, and seasonal ideas for small groups.

Now click on **Faith and Prayer**, then **Faith Resources** which gives you access to a range of faith and prayer resources, including service plans, children's activities and Bible studies.

There are separate headings for Prayer:

1. [Pray with us](#) – seasonal prayers eg Lent, Easter, current issues.
2. [Praying with a Purpose](#) – includes a template for prayer, creative ideas for prayer, Bible verses and quotes on prayer, blessings, prayers, using the Lord's prayer, a Bible reflection on prayer and an ABC of prayer for MU@Home (that is, diocesan or lone members).
3. [Midday Prayers and Wave of Prayer](#) information.
4. You can even send a prayer request which will be included in Midday Prayers at Mary Sumner House.

The other tabs, *What we do, Get Involved, Our story* and *News*, you can explore for yourself. They will introduce you to matters affecting both Mothers' Union UK and the Worldwide movement.

If you haven't already done so, I hope you will be encouraged to take the plunge and enjoy using this great resource to find out more about Mothers Union Worldwide.

Christine Jensen



Photo credits: Mothers Union Worldwide. Used by permission.



Sewing hope and rebuilding confidence

Over the last few days I have been piecing together oddments of material to create small quilts for the hospital's neonatal intensive-care unit. While this may not seem a challenging exercise for many of you who are competent sewers, for me, it was a considerable hurdle that I needed to overcome. Last year, at the beginning of my first class, the instructor said to cut 10-inch squares. I stared at the cutting board and froze. I could not think how to begin. It was a long time since I had done any real sewing and I had lost my confidence. Over many years of the usual wife-and-mother roles, as well as being in paid work, study and research, I have lost the confidence I once had when I sewed for my family and learned to quilt by hand while in America (nearly 40 years ago). Part of my plans along the road to full retirement included a hope to regain sewing skills and become good enough to do some sewing for charity. As an aside, the actions involved in designing and sewing use both sides of your brain – perhaps a strategy to reduce the odds of dementia (just an idle thought!).

Rebuilding hope with confidence through the transition from paid work, with a recognised role in life, to retirement in a new community required a lot of prayer, relying on God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discover a new identity and build confidence in other aspects of life. My mother's favourite psalm, Psalm 121, begins with a message of trust and confidence for our Christian journey¹:



Photo credit: Dinh Pham on Unsplash

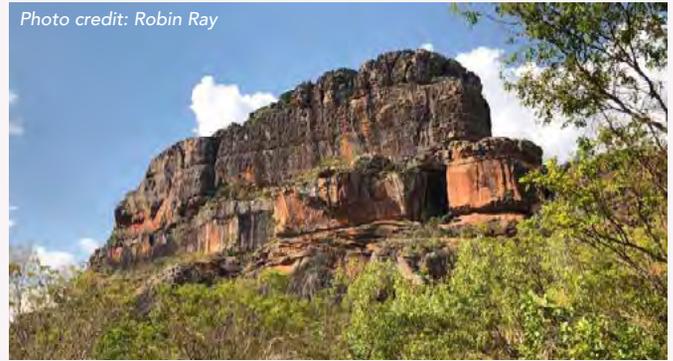


Photo credit: Robin Ray

'I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'

While this psalm refers to 'our help', for me, it is also about our hope in God who is our constant help, our guide and protector. Growing up with the Great Dividing Range at my back door aroused deeper insight and meaning concerning this psalm. The mountains remind me of our reliance on God to be with us in the high places and the low times, while drawing strength from the wonders of creation.

Rebuilding confidence in ourselves as children of God is also about the support and encouragement we gain from engaging with other people. Research tells us that people are social beings. We live longer, happier lives when we are connected meaningfully with others and recognise our own worth². Just like stitching together the oddments to create a quilt, our confidence is rebuilt when we are stitched together with God and open to connecting in diverse ways with a variety of other people. Sewing pieces together requires decisions and deliberate actions. Rebuilding our hope and confidence as members of AMUA also calls us to step out of our comfort zones and prayerfully consider deliberate and new ways to be more effective in our local communities and more intentional in our support for the God's work in northern Australia and through MU's overseas projects.

Robin Ray

1. Durston D. *A light on my path; praying with the psalms in the contemporary world*. Norwich: Canterbury Press; 2002.
2. Golden J, Conroy R, Lawlor B. Social support network structure in older people: Underlying dimensions and association with psychological and physical health. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*. 2009;14(3):280-290



Sick of it!

'I'm sick of hearing about gender violence,' a young man in the back row ranted. 'Wherever you go, someone always starts blathering about violence against women.' His friend agreed. Two of his mates from a construction site got the sack a few weeks ago for heckling women marching along the street with a banner. So unfair! What sort of boss would object to that? I wondered if I should turn around, give them a nasty look and tell them women were sick of being treated like that. An older man sitting nearby told them to be quiet; he wanted to hear what the judge was saying.

The Literary Awards ceremony continued. The judge announced the winner and gave his reasons for selecting that entry. The story covered a young woman's flight from a violent relationship, was well-written and topical. The writer had conveyed the main character's anguish so vividly, and with such empathy, the judge wondered if the story was autobiographical. It wasn't. To the astonishment of the attendees, it was written by a man who said he looked forward to the day when there would no longer be any need to talk about gender violence, a time when women were treated with respect. There were no further comments from the back row.

All people have a right to feel and be safe at home, school, work and on our streets. All people have a right to expect respect from partners and family members.

Violence against women is a violation of fundamental human rights and continues on an alarming scale in every country in the world, including Australia. Too often discrimination against women is accepted as normal behaviour. Globally, organisations and individuals are speaking out against women's rights abuse, lobbying governments to improve laws and services, and working with communities to bring about change.

Mothers' Union has supported the 16 Days of Activism campaign for several years. The campaign runs annually from 25 November until 10 December.

On 25 November 1960, sisters Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa Mirabal, who opposed the cruelty and violence of the dictatorship in the Dominican Republic, were clubbed to death and dumped at the

bottom of a cliff by secret police. In commemoration of their work, 25 November was declared International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women by the United Nations in 1999.

Human Rights Day, 10 December, commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which proclaims the inalienable rights everyone is entitled to as a human being – regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. This declaration is available in more than 500 languages and is the most translated document in the world.

Calls for action like the 16 Days of Activism shine a spotlight on the issue of violence against women, challenge discriminatory attitudes, and create public awareness about what needs to change to prevent it from happening in the first place. The Mothers' Union networks with other groups to advocate for an end to gender violence, supporting campaigns against online abuse, family violence and violence against older women. Programs support the role of relationship education in preventing abuse. Members take part in prayer vigils and community activities such as 'the walk against violence.'

What will you do to support this campaign? Information and resources are available on the website www.mothersunion.org

Susan Skowronski

Loving Lord, we pray for all to follow Christ's example of treating children, women and men with equality and respect. We pray for all who live in fear of violence and despair that life will ever change. Bring to an end their suffering, restore their sense of worth. We pray for those who perpetrate abuse with no sense of guilt or shame. Bring to justice their actions, change their inner hearts. We pray against regimes that endorse violence. Shatter their influence, initiate peace. Loving Lord, we pray for a better world where love, justice and peace may flourish. Amen

A foundation for care of older people



Photo Credit: Adam Niescioruk on Unsplash

We live in a culture which sees people's value through the matrix of beauty, power and youth. A recent WHO report found 50% of the world's population is ageist (against older people). I fear Christians and churches have also fallen into this trap.

Value of people

Scripture tells us that every person has at least a threefold value because:

- We have been created by God.
- We bear His image.
- We are so loved that Jesus died for us.

Our value is based on the reality that we are created by God, in His image. Therefore, our value transcends such characteristics such as gender, race, power, age, beauty and strength.

In thinking about older people, our starting theological point is that older people are innately, immutably valuable and loved by God.

How should Christians treat older people?

Given both people's value and that the second greatest commandment is 'love your neighbour', it is tempting to say 'we have a duty to love older people' but there's more!

Scripture explicitly commands care for older people in many places.¹ Let us consider just 4 critical verses regarding our treatment of older people:

- *Honour your father and your mother.* (Commandment 4 of the 10 Commandments) Exodus 20:12
- *You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.* (Ouch!) Exodus 22:22-24
- *The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* (The second half of Jesus' summary of how to live) Mark 12:31
- *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.* James 1:27

If you have been diligent and looked up all the texts (you are amazing!) you will have noticed that they refer primarily to care for widows and parents. While both widows and parents are not by definition old, being older brings a higher probability of being both a parent and a widow (or widower).

There is a temptation to hear 'honour you parents' as primarily a command to young children and teens. However, to think we 'outgrow' this commandment is unbiblical; indeed, this commandment first and foremost applies to *adult* children.

Scripture does not say honour *good* parents, but *all* parents. This is significant – I have seen children who commit elder abuse or simply neglect their parents because of pain or trauma from earlier in life.

Sometimes the question has been asked, 'Is the commandment to honour limited to our own parents, and is widow limited to older women and not men?' Certainly, Scripture teaches that we have particular responsibility for our family members². However, Jesus was blunt in his response to people who limited commandments (Mark 7:11-12). Thus, God's people have a particular responsibility to love older people.

It is important to note this Christian duty to value, love and care for older people applies to how older people view themselves. Too often I hear older Christians describe themselves as 'past it' or of lesser value than younger people (Biblically, the future of the church is conversion not breeding!). Yes, as we age, and particularly as we experience frailty, we simply cannot do what we once did, but our value is not as 'human doings', but 'human beings'. I am very aware that depression is a huge issue for older people, but it is critical to remember our value is not linked to our 'functionality'.

In conclusion, loving our older selves and loving other older people can be hard, economically, emotionally and time-wise. However, as Christians we must seek to love and care for older people, both as a response to their innate value and because we are commanded to.



Ben Boland

1. eg Ex 20:12, 22:22-24; Deut 10:18, 14:28-29, 15:11, 24:17-19, 25:5-10, 27:19; Job 31:16-18; Ps 68:5, 94:6, 146:9; Prov 15:25, 17:5, 28:27; Isa 1:17-23, 9:17, 10:1-2; Jer 7:5-7, 22:3; Ezek 22:7; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5; Mark 12:40-44; Luke 7:11-17, 20:46-47; Acts 6:1-15; Eph 6:2-3; James 1:27; 1 Tim 5:1-24. This list does not include the generic commandments to care for all people, particularly those who are poor or vulnerable.

2. But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8)

Hope in the face of loss

At the very end of 2020, my wife, Lynne, died following a long decline in health, a battle with dementia and a short period in hospital. Her funeral was held in mid-January.

Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow upon the bosom of the earth.
Richard II.

Three days before the funeral I wrote in my journal:

'It's just after 6.30pm and the day is drawing to a close. Soon I shall pray, and then watch the news and get supper. The house is very silent. Meg (the Labrador) is quiet and well aware that we have lost the heart of this place'.

At Lynne's funeral, her godson, Rev'd Tim Russell, read, 'We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do, who have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4.13)

For the Christian, I believe, loss and hope stand not in opposition, but together, at the heart of the mystery of Christian suffering. Christ's cross declares that God's love is without limits. Our deaths, expected because of debilitating illness, or shocking and unexpected because of youth and trauma, all have this in common: that through the suffering of those of us who are left, there is the strong hope that death is not the end. 'For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed'. (1 Corinthians 15.52)

Of course, as I journey, there are days when I experience more loss than hope, and other days when there is more hope than loss. Some days are terrible.

I had spent the two years before Lynne's death assisting the health carers' work at home while continuing to work part-time. The support from Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy was precious. After the funeral, I asked to go back full-time, and soon the particular pattern of the working week resumed. Yet it was with a new hue. Returning from work at the end of the afternoon sometimes meant a quick change around before an evening

meeting. But when I did not go out, the evenings at home were the hardest and when I missed Lynne the most. The other hard day was Saturday, when I had been at home to write my sermon, but Lynne would always be there.

A friend commented, 'Don't fill the empty gaps with more work. Instead seek to replace the hole left in you with the love of God.' So, I began to take time for myself, reading, reflecting, writing, praying. I also devised a simple pattern. Returning from work I would play with the dog and then feed her, prepare the evening meal and put it on, say Evening Prayer, watch the news, eat my meal and read or write letters before turning in.

Time does not heal. Chronologically, time puts distance between the last time I saw my loved one, and now. Our life as husband and wife has ended; my life continues. A friend commented that losing a loved one is like an amputation. So, to push that analogy further, if I have lost a limb, I can't grow it back again, can I? What does bring healing is hope – hope both in the present and for the future, both of which belong to God. Hope in the present allows me the time to grieve. As the Northumbria Community have it:

'Walk slowly,
pausing often;
do not hurry
as you walk with grief.'

There is a tendency to want to run ahead, or sit in the past. But the present is where the place of hope lies.

'Be not disturbed
by memories that come unbidden.
Swiftly forgive:
and let silence speak to you
unspoken words.
Unfinished conversation
will be resolved.
Be not disturbed.'

Jeremy James



The master cutter



In 1970, Barry and I and our (then) two children arrived in Coober Pedy, in the desert opal mining country of South Australia, to serve with the Bush Church Aid Society. During the next five years we had many interesting experiences, met many fascinating people and learnt many new and refreshing things about God and how He is working in people's lives.

One of the people we came in contact with was a young fellow who'd come to make his fortune (like so many); but also like so many, he found very little opal and eventually decided to try 'greener pastures'! Just before he left, he gave me a piece of rough, cracked opal he'd found as a 'thank you' to us for our friendship to him. It was a very pretty specimen with beautiful colour, but not very promising (I thought) for making up into jewellery.

Not long before we packed up to leave for Cann River (Gippsland), a friend suggested I take my rough specimen to one of the experienced opal cutters in the town. Maybe he could cut a stone from it – cracks and all!

The expert cutter saw the potential in my 'valueless' specimen. What a difference when he had finished with it. He knew just how to cut it to expose the magnificent colours and unique pattern and to get rid of those cracks! And now I have an opal of great value and colour, which has been put in a setting that displays its beauty and worth to an even greater extent.

This has been a wonderful illustration to me of individual human lives which may be 'broken' and 'barren' and 'cracked' – lives in which we may see little beauty or potential – but yet, when given to the Master Cutter, great changes are brought about. God, the Holy Spirit, can make something beautiful out of a seemingly worthless life.

He sees the potential in each of our lives, and if we are willing to give them completely to Him, He'll not only make them beautiful, but if we allow Him to put us in the right 'setting', He'll use us to bring great joy and help to others. We'll have the opportunity of introducing others to the Master Cutter.

As the songwriter said in 'Something Beautiful':
God understands our confusion – and even when
All we have to offer him is 'brokenness
and strife' –
He can make something
beautiful of our life.



Jenny Rainsford, Bendigo

Reproduced from Gippsland MU Newsheet
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A hymn of encouragement

based on Hebrews 4:14-16 *'Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.'*

Where high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands,
A great High Priest our nature wears,
The Saviour of mankind appears.

He, who for men their Surety stood,
And poured on earth His precious blood,
Pursues in Heaven His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.

Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.

Our Fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow-feeling of our pains,
And still remembers, in the skies,
His tears, and agonies, and cries.

In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows had a part;
He sympathises with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief.

With boldness, therefore, at the throne
Let us make all our sorrows known;
And ask the aid of heavenly power
To help us in the evil hour.

Michael Bruce, 1746-67

Intergenerational faith: our hope for the future

'Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation.' Psalm 71:18

As a relatively new member of Mothers Union it's been fascinating for me to get to know the story of Mary Sumner and the founding principles which inspired a remarkable worldwide movement. As the President of the forthcoming NSW State Conference, I've also learned a lot from fellow members about the current challenges facing AMUA, as we plan for – and pray about – our future.

Most of my adult life has been spent living and working in religious communities, so it was natural for me to ask to what extent MU could be thought of as a kind of Religious Community or Mission Order, and whether there was anything we could learn from our sister organisations.

Religious communities are born when God calls a particular person in a particular place and time to follow Christ and live the gospel in a distinctive and radical way; others are then drawn to their inspiring example, choosing to live according to a common pattern or Rule of Life and, over time, a new Community emerges; a stable 'form of life' that crystallises around the founder's spiritual intuitions, experience and God-given gifts.

All Religious Communities are called to stay faithful to the gospel and to their 'founding charism' – their distinctive spirituality or 'gift', which embraces its particular blend of prayer and action, common life, and mission purpose. Some Communities have lasted for many centuries; others have lasted only for a few decades as their charism ceases to be relevant in a new social context. But all Communities are also called upon to renew their charism, by prayerfully reflecting upon their founding principles and listening to the 'signs of the times', as they discover how God is now leading them to grow and change. When we were first praying about the theme of our 2022 state conference, I asked myself: what is the 'charism' of MU?

Our first Object, 'To uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and to promote its wider understanding', is, of course, the foundation of our identity, and Objects 3, 4 and 5 speak of 'maintaining a worldwide fellowship' and carrying



out various mission activities. But Object 2 – 'To encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the church' – is for me the heart of our charism, the key link in the chain. It's arguably also the key to our survival as an organisation; younger parents are more likely to join AMUA if we can provide them with encouragement and support in this vital area. It's a challenging task for all of us, and even a source of grief for some of our members who have been so faithful in youth and children's ministry in their churches but have often struggled to pass on the faith to their own children and grandchildren, particularly in the changing cultural landscape of the past thirty years. So, as we face the mission field of contemporary Australia, seek the Holy Spirit's guidance for the future of AMUA, and plan for our NSW State Conference, we are asking, 'How is God now calling us to renew our charism in our current day and age?'

We are praying that our 2022 conference will be characterised by inspiration, realism, and hope. **Inspiration**, as we contemplate the heart of our calling and pray to be renewed in our charism; **realism**, as we share our stories and assess the mission needs of our own day; and **hope**, as we entrust the future of our families – and all those who do not yet know and love the name of Jesus – to God who loves all God's children with a mother's love, and who longs for all our households to be living cells of God's church, sharing faith across the generations. Will you join us in this prayer, not only for us in NSW, but also for yourselves, wherever you are?

Tim Watson, Canberra-Goulburn

Fractured families

What happens if you are from a family that has not had 'favourable conditions'? What if you come from a fractured family, or you are in the midst of the turmoil and heartache of a fractured family right now? Does the Bible say anything that may be helpful to you in this situation? If you are in a situation that is fractured, or have memories that are traumatic to you, please let me share a few verses of encouragement from the Bible.

The Patriarch Abraham, although chosen and set apart by God, did not escape from difficult family situations. His son, Isaac, married Rebekah and the children born to this union were twins, Jacob and Esau. The birth and growing up of Jacob and Esau were not without problems, but I want to focus on just two of Jacob's children. Joseph is our first son to examine – the son eventually born to Jacob's beloved Rachel after much distress and failure to conceive. Jealousy from his brothers meant that he was sold into slavery through a travelling camel train on the way to Egypt. Despite the trauma that followed for Joseph, he showed his trust in God by saying to his brothers when they met again in Egypt, *'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.'* (Genesis 50:19-20)

Jacob's third son, Judah, is another example of how God can bring joy from sadness. You will find the narrative in Genesis 38. As you read this story, spare a thought for Tamar, a lady procured by Judah as a wife for his son Er, a person so wicked that we read in verse 6 'the Lord put him to death.' Tamar's subsequent distress, and longing to be a wife and mother, led her to seduce her father-in-law by trickery – an act of desperation rather than lustfulness. Despite Tamar's having had two husbands, yet not being able to conceive, a 'one night stand' results in pregnancy. Twins were conceived and one of those babies was named Perez. What a family history Perez had to live down! Talk about one mixed-up family situation!

But the *father of compassion and the God of all comfort* had plans for this messy situation. Turn

with me to Matthew chapter 1 verse 3, where we pick up the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. *'Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar.'* Tamar is one of only 4 women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus.

King David was a tough warrior, a lion killer, and a real man's man. Yet he was not without heartache and family difficulties. Let me share some of his prayers. *'You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record?'* (Psalm 56:8) *'My tears have been my food day and night,'* (Psalm 42:3). And when his son Absalom tried to usurp his throne, we read that *'...David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up.'* (2 Samuel 15:30). In his difficulties David both wept and prayed for God's comfort.

Nothing is too broken for Jesus to repair. No situation catches the father of compassion unawares. Sure, our aim might be to have a perfect family, but living in a sinful and fallen world there are consequences of sin – of our own and of others – that impact our personal lives. But in all of our messiness, we are invited to *'Come near to God and he will come near to you.'* (James 4:8) and Paul, writing to the people living in Corinth wrote, *'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.'* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

John Cronshaw



St Laurence's prayer shawl ministry



During 'Lockdown' last year we had a series of coffee-and-cake mornings to get together with one another in small groups. At one of these mornings Marilyn Oulds showed us a prayer shawl she had made – she had quietly addressed the idea of identifying needs at our local level and made a prayer shawl!

At our next AMUA morning we held a mini-workshop on making prayer shawls using cross stitch designs, knitting and crochet patterns, machine embroidery designs, a demonstration of tassel making, and also a selection of prayers. This resulted in members knitting and crocheting shawls and also making fabric shawls with embroidered Bible verses, prayers and motifs. One of our members volunteered to make cards with beautiful prayers of comfort to include with the shawls. We very soon realised this is a ministry where all our members can contribute, be it through making the shawls, writing prayers, making cards, donating notions and materials towards making the shawls, helping with hemming, pressing the completed fabric shawls, preparing the shawls for gifting, and of course praying for God's guiding hand to be on every facet of this outreach.

So, what is the distinction between a shawl and a 'prayer shawl'? Prayer! We pray before starting a shawl and each time we pick up the shawl to work on it we pray for the recipient. I start by praying a personal prayer so I can come before the Lord with a clean heart and a peaceful spirit. I like to

pray for the Lord's presence and love to be in every stitch, for inspiration in creating the shawl, that it will answer the needs of the recipient, and that they will know they are enfolded, encircled and empowered by God's Holy Spirit. If we are told what their needs are then we pray specifically for those needs. If we do not know their particular circumstances and needs, we still pray for them, because we are reminded in *Romans 8:26* that the Spirit himself will intercede for us and helps us support others in prayer. We also pray for all the recipients of shawls already gifted.

The shawls are given away as fast as we can make them. They are given not only to those in need through illness, end of life, bereavement, needing emotional or spiritual support, or any other type of challenge or difficulty they are facing, but also as a special gift of appreciation.

There is a beautiful anointing around our Prayer Shawl Ministry; we are finding it to be a source of great comfort to the recipients, and also joy to those making the shawls.

Is your branch wondering about identifying needs at your local level and forming projects to address those needs? Have you thought about starting a Prayer Shawl Ministry, ***being the friends who carried their friend on a mat to Jesus?*** A perfect fit for our 5th Object: helping those whose family life has met with adversity.

'Comfort, comfort my people', says your God'
Isaiah 40:1

Doriann Holloway, Caboolture, Qld



16 Days of activism against gender-based violence

IN THE DIOCESE OF BUNBURY

Boyup Brook MU took part in this campaign by doing two things. Firstly, Rev'd Carol Reid gathered information about gender-based violence and also where help is available in the South West of WA. This was displayed on pin-up boards in the church and the Rectory (the 'parish centre').

Secondly, their leader downloaded the '16 Days of Bible Verses and Prayers' from the Mothers Union (UK) website, and used these to highlight the campaign by sending them to everyone on our email prayer chain, doing 2 per day for 8 days.

IN THE DIOCESE OF BRISBANE

In 2020 the Anglican Mothers Union, **Bundaberg**, held 3 events to support the '16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence' campaign. We partnered with the Bundaberg Regional Council, who showed their commitment to raising awareness of domestic and family violence through the Red Bench Project. The presence of a Red Bench in a public location aims to raise public awareness and ensure this important issue remains visible. Bundaberg has four Red Benches, including one in the grounds of Christ Church Anglican, with a plaque reading 'Change the ending – let us stop domestic violence.'

On November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, AMUA members joined other local organisations at the Red Bench in Bundaberg's Alexander Park. The day was launched by the mayor, who spoke passionately about domestic violence from his experience as a police officer. A visiting member of the Red Rose Foundation spoke on the Foundation and the Red Bench Project before the Walk Against

Violence commenced. Event participants carried a large banner on which the logo of AMUA and all other supporting organisations was displayed.



At 10.30 the bells of Christ Church rang out 54 times to acknowledge the women and children who were murdered in Australia due to domestic violence between January and mid-November, 2020. The AMUA Prayer Service followed, with the lighting of candles and a speaker from EDON Place Domestic and Family Violence Centre. Community members who had participated in the Walk Against Violence joined the prayer service.

At the end of the day the ZONTA Club of Bundaberg launched a 'NO to Violence Against Women' event at the Multiplex Sport and Convention Centre. It was well-attended, with speakers and Rev'd Danni Clark from Christ Church closing the proceedings with appropriate prayers. The historic fig trees located in the grounds were flood-lit orange in remembrance.

AMUA's next event was the evening of Friday December 4 at the Good Shepherd Anglican Church, where Rev Andrew Schmidt and his helpers provided a meal (COVID-safe style), and we heard from a local solicitor who spoke on her work with domestic and family violence and the work of EDON Place.

On the UN Human Rights Day on Thursday December 10, AMUA held a prayer service to mark the conclusion of the 16 Days Campaign, again incorporating the ringing of the bells. Sadly, the bells rang 61 times, marking an additional 7 deaths in the preceding 16 days. The service included prayers, the lighting of candles and a speaker from EDON Place, the Coordinator of the Men's Program 'Responsible and Respectful Choices'.

During the 16 days, a prayer tree was placed in the church to provide the opportunity to write a prayer



and hang it on the tree. These prayers were offered to God at the final prayer service and a pamphlet of 16 days of Bible verses and prayers was made available. This was the second time Bundaberg AMUA had participated in this campaign.

Bev Perry, Bundaberg

In November 2020, **Ipswich** Mothers Union group informed the congregation of the work of the Zephyr Education Foundation, which provides for children fleeing domestic violence. Within 48 hours of arriving at a shelter the children are ready for their new school, with uniforms and school essentials all provided free of charge. During November we invited our congregation to buy lunch-boxes and water-bottles, children's underwear, socks, sanitary items and toiletries such as shampoo, soap and sunscreen. Each Sunday, shopping bags were put out for donations. In all, 301 items were collected for distribution by Zephyr. A cash donation was also included.



At the start of the 16 Days of Activism on November 25, a white-ribbon banner was hung at the side of St Paul's, facing the main street of our town. A wooden 'orange lady' was also placed outside, flanked by two 'white ribbons' (made of very stiff cardboard). A display was placed at the entrance to the church explaining the Sixteen Days of Activism: what it is and how we can be involved and do our part in preventing and assisting those in violent situations. Information about local services for those affected was also given and pamphlets could be taken away. A Prayer Tree was set up and orange paper leaves were provided so that members of the congregation and other church visitors could write their own personal prayers and place them on the tree.



A weekday service was held, inviting other churches to come and participate. We used a service specially written for our Mothers Union branches, where all those affected, around the world and at home, were prayed for. Issues were highlighted and prayers were said for those working against, and those affected by, domestic violence. Candles were lit as the prayers were said. During the service personal prayers were written on paper hands and feet and then added to the Prayer Tree amongst the orange prayer leaves already there, making for a stunning display. During the Holy Communion services on the 2 Sundays that fell in the 16 days prayers were also offered, remembering those involved and affected by domestic violence at home and around the world.

Diane Thomson

NORTH QUEENSLAND



One year when observing the 16 Days of Activism, one of our members commented, 'We hear about all these horrible situations and statistics but what can we do?' This prompted us to think about how we can support women and children who find themselves in situations of abandonment. We decided to prepare hygiene packs and distribute them through organisations which deal with such emergencies.



When we meet for the 16 Days of Activism we collect products, make bags, and one year made trauma dolls. This has expanded so that products are donated all year round, from Mothers Union members and churches. One of our members has even put out the word to her workplace. Last year we were able to provide 366 packs, which is not bad for a small group. We fellowship together while making the bags and putting the packs together.

Vivienne Feltham

Developing a toolkit to rebuild hope and confidence

As anyone who has ever built or renovated a house knows, it takes longer than we think it should. The same can be said for the process of rebuilding our lives when the difficulties and losses of life knock us down. The Reverend Peter Dyke has extensive experience in helping people work through this process, and over the following issues of *Mia Mia* he will explore some of the tools which we can use in our lives and to help others. Just to get us started, Peter has agreed to let us into his life and ministry.

Peter enjoys two complementary ministries. He is in private practice as a Registered Psychotherapist offering therapy, supervision, spiritual direction and consulting and he is a Healthcare Chaplain in the Diocese of Bendigo, where he also serves as MU Diocesan Chaplain.

Born and raised in the UK, Peter had parents who were actively involved in their local Church of England. He came to follow Christ as a teenager at youth club and quickly learned how to share his faith. After university his first career was in bookselling, culminating in managing SPCK's flagship shop in Marylebone Road, London. He trained in the Person Centred Approach at Warwick University and served in two Christian community counselling agencies. It was his work with couples in difficulty that made him recognise the value of Mothers' Union – particularly the fifth object: To help those whose family life has met with adversity – and so became a member in the parish of Dunchurch. Following his wife's ministry journey, he emigrated to Adelaide and opened a private practice. After a time working with St Mark's National Theological Centre as Manager for training in counselling and ministry, he was ordained and served the parish of Queanbeyan as a Community Chaplain. In 2018 he moved to Bendigo and is based at St Paul's Cathedral.

Peter is married to Elizabeth, who has served in ordained ministry for over 27 years and is currently the Dean at the Cathedral. They have 3 adult

children and 8 grandchildren, all in the UK. Peter relaxes with walking the native bushland that surrounds the city and gardening, where he is learning how to build and manage raised beds for growing vegetables.

Peter will be contributing to *Mia Mia* on the theme Rebuilding Hope and Confidence. He writes: 'My favourite story comes from the time when I was a volunteer ward chaplain. I had just completed my training and remembered just one thing: pay full attention to the patient you are with. One day I was sharing some lines from Romans chapter 8 with an elderly saint, and paying attention to the patient. The staff had all gathered round the television where there were pictures of a jet flying into a skyscraper. Resisting the distraction, and thinking that the pictures were inappropriate for day time viewing,



I focused solely on my patient. We shared our reflections on the scripture, prayed together and I left the bedside. I wondered what all the fuss was about. That date and event was later to be called 9-11.'

Peter Dyke

Prayer

Lord, what can we say when disaster comes to others? How can we empty ourselves of platitudes and find words that will really help those whose lives have been shattered by an unexpected moment in time – a diagnosis, a bomb, a death, and accident, a fire or some other event that will change lives forever. Lord, as we journey with those who suffer, please use our unanswered questions, our unresolved doubts, and above all our trust in you to touch others with your love, healing, peace and hope.

*Flo Walters in 'Dear Lord...'
Mothers Union, 2018 Used by permission*



Over the Fence

There are some elite groups no-one wants to be part of. Standing in my own laundry, I had just joined the select few who could say that they have inadvertently put a book through the washing machine.

The whole family was devastated. This was no mass-produced paperback of which we stood a chance of securing a replacement copy. I had ruined a one-off treasure, a pictorial memento of our family's recent visit to world-class LEGO sculptor Nathan Sawaya's exhibition 'Art of the Brick.' The book had contained page after page of colour plates of unimaginable creativity. We had briefly wrestled with the decision to purchase it, then decided that, given the unique nature of the publication, we would buy it. It would serve to help us recall the stratospheric skill of the artist, and also as a lasting reminder of the wonderful day we had shared.

Hot on the heels of my family's sense of loss and disappointment came wonder and incredulity. How could I have possibly mistaken a bound volume for 'smalls'? It was a reasonable question that required a response. I mounted the weakest of defences: I had not intentionally laundered the book, although, reflecting wistfully on its bright, primary palate, had it been a washable item, it would definitely have qualified for the coloureds load. Following the exhibition, the book had been carefully placed in a secure, inner section of a backpack. On arriving home, and in a flurry of over-eagerness, I noted the bag's need for a wash. I had thrown the backpack into the machine, added a scoop full of Spree and hit Start.

I apologised to my family for robbing them of something special, both material and of great value in terms of re-kindling shared memories. The weight of sadness and regret drove me outside. I stood in our backyard, noting that our ever-faithful

Vicar's warden had recently fitted a very expensive security sensor light. How grateful I was for this lovely man who continually watched over us in so many practical ways. 'I bet he never put a book through the soak cycle,' I reflected sorrowfully.

The irreversible nature of the wretched situation was overwhelming – I needed a release. I had recently joined a local soccer team that played casually on Friday afternoons. It had proven to be highly enjoyable and a reliable outlet for pent-up frustrations. I searched the yard for a ball and kicked it – hard. The ball curved gracefully and with considerable force. Then, with the accuracy of a guided Exocet missile, the ball struck the newly-installed security light. The light

broke instantly at the neck. The globe, hanging only by its exposed electrical viscera, swayed uselessly.

This was disastrous. We had barely recovered from the aftermath of the book-washing. I swiftly procured a ladder, along with the light-smasher's salvation – a roll of duct tape. I carefully bound the 2 pieces together with no hope of my guilty repair doing anything beyond postponing discovery. Working blindly,

high above my head, my arms and neck ached. Yet with the discomfort came some sort of strange relief, a sense of having endured some sort of Puritanical penance for my day's deeds. I carefully stepped down from the ladder and reviewed my repair – it wasn't bad. I carefully put the ladder away and re-entered the house. The truth could wait.

'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.' Hebrews 4:15 – 16

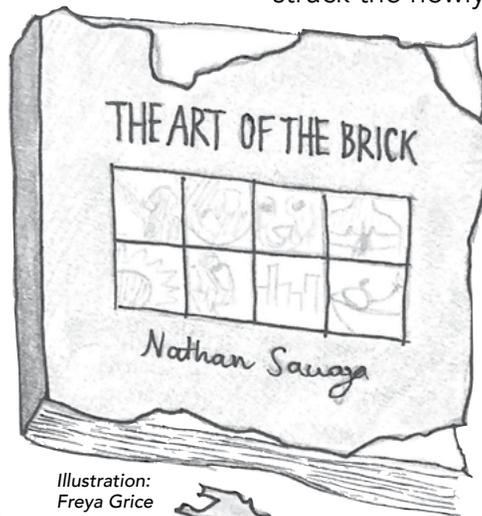


Illustration:
Freya Grice

AMUA North Queensland Torres Strait visit and workshops 2021

In June and July Vivienne Feltham and Anne Watkins visited 4 of the islands in the Torres Strait to conduct workshops and to fellowship with and encourage members of Mothers Union. Here Viv shares their experiences, undertaken with funds provided by AMUA members through the Northern Outreach Fund.

'Using material adapted from MSH, augmented with other material designed to help us move into the future, we prepared the following workshops:

- Rebuilding Hope and Confidence exploring our gifts.
- Mothers Union – Caring for Families
- Rebuilding Hope and Confidence in Mothers Union
- Country of Study – Solomon Islands.



MER (MURRAY ISLAND) JUNE 25-29

We were warmly welcomed and accommodated near the workshop venue. Bishop Keith accompanied us and joined in the workshops when available. Most of the days and evenings were spent with worship, fellowship, and sharing meals together. We were able to present all the workshops, which were well-attended and enthusiastically received. The women of the Community come together in prayer and worship, and they have seen many miracles – families returning to church and renewing their faith in God. It was a happy, joyous occasion.

THURSDAY ISLAND JUNE 30-JULY 1

We arrived in time to join in with the preparations for the Coming of the Light celebrations. We joined the ladies, helping with weaving decorations for the beautifully prepared church. The men polished the floors, oiled the pews and prepared the grounds. To my surprise, when we had finished hanging the decorations in the church, we found that a village had appeared in the grounds!!



All the churches on the Island, and many from other islands and the mainland, came together for the service, with many voices singing in harmony and their colourful clothes adding to the worship. The feasting that night was overwhelming in its generosity, and the flavour of the food was amazing. The entertainment started with a skit from the children, followed by singing and dancing. I was honoured to be asked to close the festival with prayer.



MOA ISLAND JULY 2-5

There was an Ecumenical Convocation happening at the same time as our visit, so we joined in for the first evening of our arrival and the Sunday service. Anne and I had a good discussion with the President, Mary Wapau.



On Saturday afternoon we shared the workshop on Gifts to those who were able to come, and again they produced beautiful posters. We met again on Monday morning to hold the remainder of the workshop. We shared fellowship in a relaxed way, talking about many aspects of Mothers Union. We also conducted a combined workshop sharing the Country of Study information and core values of Mothers Union and finished with a study on 'I am the vine; you are the branches.'



THURSDAY ISLAND JULY 6

An evening workshop on Gifts was well received; making the posters enabled participants to reflect on the positive aspects of Mothers Union. Afterwards, members shared some of the concerns in their community. The next morning, we gathered for a time of worship. Fair and open discussion was able to be held. Mothers are excited about the bishop's plan of autonomy for the Torres Strait, which hopefully will encourage Branch Executive and the Diocesan Executive from the Torres Strait to work together to share the light of Christ in this place.

BAMAGA

Our visit coincided with Sad News Sorry Business which affected many members of this branch, including the President, Marjorie, whose older brother had passed into God's care. We decided to make ourselves available at the church for anyone who felt able to come. Three eager



members joined us for the Gifts workshop and we left enough material for the ladies to undertake the workshop with their branch at a time when all could participate.

We were privileged to be able to visit Maria Garbardi, long serving member of AMUA, to present her with some MU earrings and to hear a little of her history. When we arrived back at the church, we were available to fellowship and share with women from the branch.



During the visits we were able to share the bishop's suggestion that Notebook computers be purchased, loaded with appropriate AMUA files and then given to the Branch Executive of each of the isolated communities. The proposal was put forward as one of the items in the grant application for Northern Outreach funding, and to our delight it was approved and the funding given. The members were very excited and full of ideas, even suggesting that they would be able to hold Zoom meetings! Because of the time spent at each island we were able to get to know more about the communities and their concerns. Many became more comfortable sharing with us as we sat weaving decorations and eating together. Anne and I felt quite humbled by the welcome we received. Our Mothers Union members are reaching out into their communities as an integral part of the Anglican Church in North Queensland.'

Vivienne Feltham, North Queensland



Rebuilding hope and confidence in Wongan Hills

St Peter's Anglican Church in Wongan Hills, SWA, has, for many years, run a Parish Pantry for people to access food when times are tough. It was noticed that many of the people who used the service had little to no knowledge of how to cook healthy meals or budget, and so the Meals on a Shoestring programme was born. With funding from various sources, the first sessions were run in 2008-09 as a 12-part programme extending over 2 years, followed by later sessions in 2017 and 2021. People were invited to come along and learn a range of skills with an emphasis on fun, food, support and encouragement. A local 'caterer extraordinaire' was the instructor and, with her help, participants learned about budgeting, how to cater for a child's birthday party on a budget, cleaning naturally, baking for Christmas, getting the most out of their weekly shop and many other skills.

While the aim was to help people, we also wanted to encourage them to help others. As a result, participants filled gift-boxes for children



who have nothing through Operation Christmas Child; 50 dozen Anzac biscuits were cooked for Australian troops in Afghanistan, and at the end of each programme, a Long Table Lunch was planned, cooked and served by the ladies as a 'thank you' to those who had supported Meals on a Shoestring, including Shire Councillors, church members and family.

The Meals on a Shoestring programme is about much more than just good housekeeping. The women who have joined the project have typically felt marginalised by the community and not socially acceptable. They have been keenly aware of their perceived shortcomings and felt helpless to change things. MOAS has significantly reduced this feeling of alienation for members of the group. Outcomes have included personal and social confidence, respect for themselves, others and the community, an awareness that community support is more likely to be offered if reciprocated, an understanding of how good food gives you good health, skill development, including knowledge of cooking terms, hygiene, nutrition, whole foods and budget meals, and camaraderie within the group.

One lady involved in the programme loved cooking and wanted to give back to the community, so she made freezer meals which were given to many around our community, including those experiencing loss, pregnant mums, mums with new babies, those who are unwell, or men who live on their own. Another lady who has 5 children had never felt confident enough to make

cupcakes for her children's birthdays at school – she thought nobody would want to eat anything she made. With the encouragement of the group, she made some beautiful cupcakes for her daughter's kindy class, not only proving her ability to herself, but demonstrating it to her kids and starting a generational change.

It has also been a blessing to see the participants move on to previously-unattainable activities. These have included getting work with the local shire, operating the computer at our weekly church-run Mainly Music program, keeping the parish pantry organised, having the confidence to meet regularly with the Deputy Principal and other teachers at the school, joining a Bible study, cleaning our church hall and volunteering with our cake stalls, and even our MU Country Festival.

In Romans 10:14-15, Paul says 'How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"' While we are always called to preach the good news, we should always show it in our actions as well. The MOAS programme has been one way for our church to show people who feel unloved, unworthy and unwelcome that they are loved, worthy and welcome by the church, and therefore by God. We hope that the changes in the lives of our participants will spread out to their families and to the community and be one more way of generating hope and love in our community.

Heather Stickland and Karen Box



News from ACCM

The Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM) recently launched an Australian-first service: parents can check which personal data and identifiers popular children's app titles collect and who's receiving that information.

With the support of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, and in partnership with the San Francisco-based research group, AppCensus, ACCM has launched this ground-breaking tool to help parents to vet, for potential privacy intrusions, popular apps that their children want to play. ACCM and AppCensus will provide monthly analyses of 50 top Android apps popular with Australian children. These will show what 'dangerous permissions' are granted, what identifiers are gathered, and to whom the data is sent.

In a recent research project funded by the SA Law Foundation, ACCM found that there were no protections in place in Australian law to protect children's online privacy effectively. This leaves parents with a big responsibility and low levels of effective support. As part of this present project, a Macquarie University team has provided the research that underpins ACCM's development of parent-friendly videos and texts (short and long) on issues from 'Why does children's privacy matter?' to 'How to talk to your 3-5-year-old about privacy' (using their toes!).

Check out the new resources at [<https://childrenandmedia.org.au/app-reviews/apps-can-trap-tracking>] and spread the word.

Taken from Small Screen, May 2021 Used by permission



Around the dioceses

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN IN BALLARAT

It was so lovely to be able to gather once again for our Lady Day celebration on March 25. Following the procession of banners, the service was led by Bishop Garry, who also preached. MU chaplain, Fr. David Oulton, assisted in the service and commissioned the Executive. Seventeen certificates for service and commitment to Mothers Union, ranging from 10 to 55 years, and one 50-year badge and two 25-year badges for service to MU were presented to members.



Our guest speaker was Rev James Wood, the priest at Warracknabeal. James spoke about his Boys' Shed project, which aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for the boys to be themselves, to develop

social and practical skills and to work on woodwork projects using recycled and reclaimed timber.

Separate sessions are conducted for primary and secondary-aged boys; all who assist in the project are volunteers. The Boys Shed is currently in the Rectory garage, but it is proposed that a new shed will be built at the rear of the church hall.



Elizabeth Fryatt

BRISBANE

Helene Baker writes: The Caloundra Branch of Mothers' Union hosted the World Day of Prayer at St Andrew's Caloundra, on Friday, March 5. We enjoyed a wonderful morning of fellowship and prayer, followed by a COVID-compliant morning tea (which included traditional coconut cake) together with World Day of Prayer representatives and folk from other denominations, including the Salvation Army and the Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian Lutheran and Uniting churches in Caloundra and Glasshouse Country – a truly ecumenical event.

Decorations in the church were beautiful, depicting the culture, food, industry and gifts of Vanuatu, including fruits, flowers, palms, shells and traditional cloths. Many of our MU members and our guests dressed in colourful attire, in keeping with colours of the flag of Vanuatu, and our locum priest, the Rev. Ingrid Busk, dressed in a traditional MuMu, which had been supplied by our guest speakers, Gary and Jill Innes. Gary and Jill spent many years

living and working in Vanuatu, initially with Wycliffe Bible Translators and more recently in helping with the rebuilding and restoration of schools and churches on the island, following the devastating cyclones which had caused so much damage. It was a colourful and musical service and all who participated had a most enjoyable fellowship to celebrate 'World Day of Prayer – Vanuatu'



ST JOHN'S HERVEY BAY

After putting our celebration on hold for a year due to COVID lockdown, St. John's MU enjoyed a very special day of fellowship, prayer and a luncheon on April 20 to celebrate the 80th birthday of MU in the parish. A moving Communion service, led by Fr Greg Loumeau, also included admission of 2 new members, Dilys Bradbury and Gwen Taylor.

Guest speaker, Coral Mungomery's, presentation focused on her family's involvement at St John's over 5 generations and the history of MU in Hervey Bay over the past 80 years. Both Coral's mother and grandmother were at the first meeting held in February 1940.

Following the service, which concluded with Midday Prayers, guests were able to mingle, view memorabilia on display and browse the Mother's Union book shop. Our birthday cake, a beautiful display of cupcakes decorated in blue and white, was a team effort. The lighting of the candles was carried out by our longest serving member, Mrs Cherelle Mungomery, and visiting member, Margaret Cook, who was celebrating her birthday on this day. The day finished with thanks, presentations and prayers by Mrs Helen Jarvis.



Rosemary Gilby

BUNBURY

Boyup Brook MU celebrated Mothers' Day by making up small gift bags containing a couple of chocolates and a prayer. These were handed out on Sunday to all the ladies at our service as well as taken to the aged-care lodge. Along with other parishioners, some members helped to

make beautiful buttonhole flower sprays, which were delivered to the local shops on Saturday for anyone to take as a gift. These were apparently well received – there were a lot of posts about them on social media.

Jan Ritson

CANBERRA & GOULBURN

Following over 60 years of service to Mothers Union, Helen Lloyd has passed on the Treasurer's baton. Helen came to Canberra in 1974 and shortly afterwards became the Canberra branch treasurer. She became the Australian Commonwealth Treasurer in 1981, holding this position for two terms until October 1986. Helen was elected treasurer of the Canberra diocesan council in 1986 and has served almost continuously since 1987. Her service to Mothers' Union, worldwide, nationally and within our diocese has been one of great passion, commitment and the most meticulous record keeping. Helen will remain on the Executive Committee in an advisory role to train and guide our new treasurer during the coming twelve months. It was with gratitude and sincere thanks that we recorded Helen's amazing record of service to MU at our AGM in March, and presented her with a small gift in appreciation.



'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

Joan Eberlé

Presentation to Mrs Helen Lloyd by Dorothy Mackenzie at Canberra & Goulburn Diocesan AGM

GRAFTON

Gae Shorten reports: I was invited to attend the service at Dorrigo Anglican Church on Pentecost Sunday to present a 50-year badge and certificate to Mothers Union member, Kath Parker, recognising her dedication to the Aim and Objects of Mothers Union over those years, spent in the one parish. Kath has totally immersed herself in all the activities of the parish, including as a parish councillor and numerous roles in Mothers Union. It was very special to be able to share the presentation with Bishop Murray, who was making a pastoral visit that day. As it was an ecumenical service, with members of other denominations from Dorrigo, it was a wonderful opportunity to share a little about Mothers Union and to be able to accept the

encouragement from those other denominations on behalf of our mission society.



Bishop Murray Harvey, Robyn Burley, Meg Corlis, Gae Shorten, Kath Parker, the Rev'd Canon Mike Ridge

NEWCASTLE

Daphne Whelan, of Lambton Mothers Union writes:

We give thanks to God, and our founder Mary Sumner, for the love and fellowship we share as members of Mothers Union. From life's beginnings to life's end, we are here, and we care. During Covid this support has continued with phone calls and cards of encouragement, prayers and support of family life, baptismal contacts and follow-up, and for the aged, strugglers in life, the lonely and our sisters and brothers here and worldwide, including in Madagascar, our overseas link partner. Hospital visits and baby booties were given to new mums, 527 hospital emergency bags containing personal hygiene items have been donated to John Hunter Hospital for emergency patients (personal letters received by us show how gratefully these are received), 'coffee and care' continues at the children's court and quilted prayer rugs with threads to tie as prayers are made have been given to ill or frail Mothers Union members.

The **NSW Diocesan Presidents** (and extras!) met on Tuesday 15 June in the home of Glenda McSorley (DP Sydney) for a morning of teaching, prayer and encouragement. We had agreed at the last MUA Council in Melbourne (November 2019) to meet together in Sydney in September 2020, but that was postponed because of Covid. Once we knew that the AMUA Council had been deferred again we began to discuss the prospect of an 'in between' get together, with Glenda offering to host us in her home.

The participants made enormous efforts to get there, catching early coaches and trains or staying overnight. Only Gae Shorten from Grafton Diocese and Lorraine Clarkson from Bathurst Diocese were unable to be present, though Marilyn Robey and Christine Hurford came to represent Bathurst in Lorraine's absence.

We had a wonderful morning. Christine Jensen encouraged us with her devotion on 'An Anchor for the Soul' based on the words of Lamentations 3:21-24. We shared personally and prayed for each other. Each Diocesan representative reported on something of their area's programme for the year. Joan Eberlé from Canberra-Goulburn gave us advance information about the MU State Conference to be held in Canberra on the first weekend in April 2022, with the theme of 'Intergenerational Faith' and speaker Ruth Lukabyo.

Glenda's hospitality, including a hot Italian lunch and dessert, was much appreciated. We left promptly at 2.00 to catch trains or coaches or to drive home. As one of the participants said, when I thanked her for making such an effort to travel and come, 'We have to come – we really miss the fellowship.'

Elizabeth Parker, DP, Armidale



(Clockwise from left) Marilyn Wilkinson (Sydney secretary), Christine Jensen (AMUA Vice President), Elizabeth Parker (Armidale), Denise Brown (Newcastle), Marilyn Robey, (AMUA treasurer, Bathurst), Wendy Mayer (Sydney treasurer), Glenda McSorley (Sydney), Lyn Middleton (AMUA secretary, Riverina), Joan Eberle (Canberra/Goulburn), Christine Hurford (Bathurst)

NORTH QUEENSLAND

Vivienne's and my visit to Mer (Murray) Island, the easternmost island in the Torres Strait, at the end of June, was amazing. We were very warmly welcomed and offered amazing meals and fellowship from the whole community. It is such a vibrant group of women of all ages, supported by the men. The workshops we presented were well attended and enthusiastically participated in, but we enjoyed equally the fellowship, as they shared

the miracles of what God is doing on this Island within families and the community.



Pictured is the Marou family – Mum Elma and her husband Ziggy, and their

three daughters Ginush, Lythia and Anita. Elma is the President of the Mer Branch of AMUA. Over

the 4 days of our visit all of the ladies took part in the workshops, and as a family they undertook much of the preparation for the meals that were shared with the community. Dad, Ziggy, was a great help in transporting Viv and myself (and many other ladies) to and from the workshop venue and St James' church. Ziggy also shared his personal testimony with us and how he and his family have come back to the church. It is a testimony to the power of prayer.

One of the highlights of our visit was the great pleasure of enrolling the youngest Marou daughter, Anita, as a member of Mothers Union. Even though Anita is only 12 years old, she is a wonderful example of a Mothers Union member and our future. All the family participate in MU activities and Anita also attends the weekly AMUA prayer evening with her mother. This prayer meeting is held at the church every Tuesday evening when the Mothers Union members faithfully pray for concerns in their community. There have been some remarkable changes to the community since the women have been coming together in prayer. I think we could all learn from their wonderful example.

Anne Watkins

NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA

In June, Carnarvon branch enjoyed a visit from their Diocesan President, Gladys Sutton, who, accompanied by MaryAnn Grosvenor, drove almost 500 kms from Geraldton (a drive of approximately 6hrs) to visit our isolated branch. On Saturday our guests visited the Carnarvon Market before joining us at our meeting in the afternoon, at which MaryAnn gave a very encouraging testimony of what the Lord has done in her life. After the meeting I was able to share my poem, 'Are you a Ripple on a Pond?' On Sunday, after our church service with Rev. Dale Appleby, we had an early 'bring and share' lunch so Gladys and MaryAnn could meet our congregation. They set off at 11.30 am for the long drive home to Geraldton, hoping to arrive home before dark.



From left: Sue van Dongen, Mervin & Jean Beard, Jessie Larman, Gladys Sutton, MaryAnn Grosvenor, Margaret Moore, Joy Appleby.

THE MURRAY

Food and Friendship on Fridays – a new soup kitchen in the Adelaide Hills

Mount Barker is a vibrant town in the Adelaide Hills, South Australia, that has undergone rapid growth in recent years which has seen an increasing number of people within our community feeling socially excluded or experiencing financial hardship. Mount Barker Mothers' Union wanted to reach out to vulnerable or disadvantaged people in our local community – members had expressed concerns about local people's unmet needs. So, after a lively discussion about possible types of outreach, we agreed on a weekly soup kitchen in our parish hall.

Unemployment in the area is trending higher than the national average and there is a recognised shortage of social/community or low-cost housing, which can lead to financial stress. Although the rate of homelessness is below the national average, figures show a 32% increase between 2014 and March 2020 in the Mount Barker district. With these individuals and families in mind, our new venture, 'Food and Friendship on Fridays,' reflects our underlying philosophy – beautiful in its simplicity – *all welcome*. Collectively, we believe that our mission is to serve our community as whole. In doing so, we hope to create a warm, inclusive and friendly environment, so every person feels welcomed, valued and connected. The spirit of our new venture is captured by the following verse from Matthew 25:35, 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.'

We opened the doors on June 4; and we already have some 'regulars'. Delicious, fresh rolls are supplied by a local business, and we cook a variety of soups, with produce generously donated by farmers and food suppliers. Our kitchen is staffed by friendly volunteers from our Mothers' Union and local parish. We are happy to see new faces every week – people from all walks of life, joining together to share a simple meal, conversation and companionship. We feel blessed to be able serve our community, and we pray that it will continue to go from strength to strength. As Jesus tells us: 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

(Matthew 25:45) This is love in action.

Emma McArthur

Dan Cregan, Member for Kavel, dropped in to see the team in action



Also in The Murray, the Strathalbyn branch decided that they wanted to do something new for the local school-children, but what??? A phone call to the Pastoral Support Worker (chaplain) got her thinking and she came up with the idea of our supplying new drink bottles for the children who constantly forget or do not have bottles and request disposable cups from the staff, since drinking from taps and bubblers is no longer allowed. It's not just a summer problem, as sport and play cause thirstiness all year round. Each bottle has a tag attached to say that it was donated by us with an AMUA sticker to help advertise the fact that someone cares.



Eileen Smith

WANGARATTA

Central Goulburn MU members went along to Nagambie Healthcare's Lakeview Lodge on Thursday, May 27 to lead the residents in a short program of popular songs, the armchair Hokey Pokey dance, some fun ditties and some readings. Residents and staff were very happy to join together with the MU folk once again for this annual church activity.



The parish of Central Goulburn had a boost to their numbers on Sunday, June 27 when 4 new members were enrolled into the MU branch at St Paul's, Avenel. After Covid restrictions had delayed the enrolment, the folk from the 3 centres of the parish were happy to celebrate this new influx of members together. Although not all the MU members were able to attend and welcome the newcomers to their branch, Mary Greenshields, Diocesan MU Acting VP, enrolled Rev'd Richard Pennington, and he in turn enrolled Jenny Pennington, Elaine Youngman and Doreen Taylor. Elaine is the third generation to join Mother's Union and her mother, long-term member,

Muriel Andrea, was pleased to have her join her in the branch.

Diane Grant



L-R. Back row. Jenny Pennington, Margaret Hurren and Dawn Elliott.

Front L-R: Maree Boyle, Mary Greenshields, Diane Grant, Rev Richard Pennington, Doreen Taylor and Elaine Youngman, Muriel Andrea (60+ years a member), Kaye Jones.

WILLOCHRA



Members across the diocese were saddened by the death of long-serving member, June Barlow, who died on April 13. Vice-president Judy Bell shares her reflections on June's contribution to Mothers Union.

'In her home, the church and the community, June led a busy life looking after her 7 children, working with her husband Ian and being involved in many Committees – and always with a smile.

June held the following positions in Mothers Union in Willochra: Diocesan President and Secretary, Central Area President and in Port Pirie we were President and Secretary of the local Branch. When I was elected to the Australian Executive as Overseas and Outreach Chairman in 1986, I needed a secretary so I asked June, and she didn't hesitate in saying yes. We spent 6 happy and busy years keeping in touch with members in Australia, PNG, Melanesia, various Dioceses in Africa, New Zealand and the Overseas Chairman in Mary Sumner House in London.

June was made a Life Vice-President of Mothers Union in Willochra in recognition of her service to Mothers Union in the Diocese. Even in retirement June kept busy. She formed a Mothers Union Anna [prayer] Group and took her turn playing the organ at St Barnabas. I give thanks to God for this special lady who was my dear friend and who always greeted everyone with a lovely smile.'

Links in a chain

A MUA members are very familiar with the idea of Diocesan links, and many strong bonds have been formed between dioceses as they have prayed for each other across the world. Two people who also work to strengthen links and bonds between dioceses are our Zone Trustees and the Regional development Coordinator.



Pamela Abana has recently been elected as the Trustee for Zone C, South Pacific (Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Australia, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea) on the Trustee

Board of Mothers Union Worldwide. Pamela will take up this position (currently held by Libbie Crossman) in January, 2022. Pamela has a long and distinguished involvement with Mothers Union in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands and beyond. Since joining in 1988 as a young woman Pamela has served as Secretary, Diocesan President and Provincial President, and her grass-roots work has included hospital visiting, helping victims of domestic violence, the deaf, widows, those sick at home, those with special needs, the elderly and in training young girls through GFS.

As Provincial President Pamela is responsible for the oversight of MU work in the provincial office and in the delivery of programs such as Positive Parenting and Literacy training, the establishment of Savings Clubs and the monitoring of specifically identified areas of medical service delivery at rural health clinics. She also ensures the coordination of plans of actions at diocesan, regional, parish and vestry level and organises fundraisings to meet yearly budgets. No stranger to administration, Pamela ensures that General Meetings, Council Meetings and Executive meetings are carried out and she represents Mothers' Union at General Synod and several top Boards of the Anglican Church of Melanesia as well as

Government, NGOs and Civil Society Organization (CSOs). Oversight of Mothers Union in the nine dioceses of the province of Melanesia (with a membership numbering 17,000), includes coping with the many communication and transport difficulties brought about by the widely-scattered nature of the islands which make up Melanesia.

Pamela is a woman of deep faith and commitment to Jesus. Theological training in New Zealand (from 2005 to 2008), and a daily pattern of personal and family prayer and Bible reading, combined with a heart to serve her local church, see her sharing in parish activities such as home visits, Bible studies, the Sunday Eucharist and other parish programmes. She also taught at the Anglican Theological College from 2009 to 2017. A widow since 1991, Pamela has five children and 16 grand-children, ranging in age from one to 16. Just in case you might think that she hasn't enough to do, Pamela also acts as guardian for two other children!



Jeanette Lawrence is a regional Development Coordinator at Mary Sumner House (MSH). Here she introduces herself:

Hello everyone from a wet and windy UK Summer! As a Regional Development

Coordinator at Mary Sumner House, I have the fantastic responsibility of being Zone C's link person to MSH and the wider membership. I started working for Mothers' Union in 2013 as the Worldwide Administrator, and through involvement with the Global MULOA process my role has changed to its current form. I have been very privileged during my time at MU to have visited and shared fellowship with numerous members in the UK, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Melanesia, New Zealand and Uganda. I find it very inspiring to hear of the work done and the passion each and every member has for MU, and feel my role is to provide support however I am able. Currently that involves being the lead at MSH on the Worldwide Parenting Programme, which we are the process of reinvigorating, and working with members across Provinces on a pilot Capacity Building programme. When I saw the advert for the job at MSH so many friends and

family encouraged me to apply as they said it 'fit' me completely.

My faith journey started when I was brought to church at two weeks old, and I have continued to learn and grow ever since. Being able to combine my faith and past job experiences into this role is unique and fulfilling. I attend an Ecumenical Anglican and Methodist parish with three churches, and view the congregations there as my extended family. My main church is St David's which, having a Welsh family and living in England, makes me smile. Family is incredibly important to me, and many members will have heard me speak about my Dad and sister. I am lucky to have a musical family with Dad singing, my sister playing the keyboard and singing and myself playing five different types of recorder. My sister and I help play the music at church, which is a privilege to help others share their faith in worship.

I am very happy to hear from members at any time, and would love the chance to share your stories and work with the wider membership. So, I will leave you now with one last crazy fact – my sister and I recently did a fundraiser where we competed as Cat and Dog in an archery competition. Unfortunately, I accidentally sent a photo of myself dressed as a Dog to the MU Global Leadership on WhatsApp. The wonders of technology!



Newcastle members tell others what Mothers Union is doing

