

MIA *mia*

ANGELICAN
MOTHERS UNION
AUSTRALIA

SPRING 2022



Lord, transform our community

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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

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to the editor.

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Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord

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Meet our contributors



Anita Johnson is the artist whose painting, 'Pentecost' is on the front cover of this issue of *Mia Mia*. Anita comes from Lajamanu in Central Australia; she is a Warpiri woman.

Anita is a Carer for her husband, Colin, who is on dialysis and that is why they live in Darwin. She has been in Darwin for the last five years and she and Colin live at 'Garaworra Transitional Housing', an Anglicare Project.



Fiona Preston grew up in Melbourne and there met her husband, Nigel, and had their two children, Samuel and Tobias. Fiona never imagined moving to regional Victoria, but in

2016 Fiona and Nigel got itchy feet and moved back to Bendigo, Nigel's hometown. Bendigo has provided a wonderful place to bring up their children and be involved in many community and ministry opportunities. Fiona was ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo in 2019 and is currently finishing off her Bachelor of Theology with Ridley Theological College. She serves as the Anglican Chaplain at Tarrengower Women's Prison and Coordinator of MinisTree Bendigo, which provides chaplaincy and care on the streets of Bendigo's CBD.

Gwen Wright is a member of 'Freshwater' Anglican Parish at Deception Bay, Queensland. She was born in Sydney, went to school at Arthur Phillip High School in Parramatta and has raised 2 daughters. Gwen has lived in Queensland since 2004. She enjoys all types of music (even heavy metal!) and has also dabbled in squash, tennis and lawn bowls, but osteoarthritis finally won out.

Gwen has written poetry and prose from an early age, but since 2018 her writings have been solely scriptural/ spiritual. She has now written some 145 prose items concerning her faith, her journey, and her God. Gwen says, 'Faith to me is everything. Salvation is everything. Without them I find my life is without meaning or purpose. I'm a 67-years-young, simple girl, with simple tastes, who lives a simple yet extraordinary faith in the Lord Jesus Christ'.

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From the Editor's desk

Greetings once again from Central Queensland, where Spring means mild, sunny days and cool nights. The transformation we see around us in Spring is a reminder that God is constantly at work, bringing change and new life, not only in the natural world, but in the lives of individuals and communities.

Our cover features a depiction of Pentecost by Anita Johnson, a Warpiri woman now living in Darwin. Since it is the gift of the Spirit and the spread of the gospel from 'Jerusalem [and in] all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth' that results in the greatest transformation – that of the human heart – I thought it particularly appropriate.

I have been excited by the contributions to this issue from so many AMUA groups and individual members who share ways in which they are engaged in transformative action in their communities. I was deeply moved by the work of our guest contributor, Fiona Preston, in her ministry to the homeless in Bendigo, and of the commitment of the people of Ballarat and Indoorapilly to the homeless in their areas. Once again, our regular contributors have challenged and encouraged me about what it means to both be transformed by Christ and to engage in transformative action.

In November, the Lord willing, our Australian Council will meet to review our work over the past 3 years, to thank our Executive members and to elect new officers to replace those who have completed their terms. I thought it fitting that we should acknowledge the work of Anne, Christine, Denise and Lesley, who have all completed their terms of service, by inviting them to share some of the highlights of their time on Executive. I hope you enjoy their reflections, and join me in thanking God for their faithful service, especially as they have sought to encourage us through the challenges and disappointments brought about by the Covid 19 pandemic.

So, as you read this issue, may the Lord encourage, inspire and challenge you, as he has me, to do whatever possible to *transform our communities*.

Christine



A word from our President

As I reflect on my term as Provincial President of Australia (one year as Acting PP and six as elected PP), I find myself smiling at so many great memories. I realize I've been incredibly privileged to meet so many wonderful MU members here in Australia as well as overseas.

I attended the Provincial Presidents Global Gathering in 2017 in Ireland, where the guidelines of MULOA (Mothers Union – Listening, Observing, Acting) were first tested (and where, at a Eucharist, I administered the wine from a 1772 chalice), and in 2019 in Rwanda, where I saw first-hand the results of MULOA in their MU Savings and Loans Programs. Rob and I were present at Southwark Cathedral for the inductions of Sheran Harper, as Worldwide President, and Australia's Rev'd Libbie Crossman as a Trustee. I've met with staff at Mary Sumner House, London, and joined a Provincial Meeting there.

I spoke at the Aotearoa New Zealand Provincial Council and travelled to the Solomon Islands to join 2,000 members as they celebrated their 100th Anniversary of MU. Our MULOA Conferences helped us to introduce the program to members in Zone C.

I led our own 125th Anniversary celebrations in Launceston with the then WWP, Lyn Tembey, as our special guest where 200 members reminisced about the past and thought about how to strengthen our future. I attended many wonderful Diocesan events in at least 13 dioceses – then the Pandemic hit with an impact like none other!

But MU didn't stop – globally, members took to social media and Zoom meetings for worldwide, national and local gatherings, enabling us to continue to support MU work all over God's world. With regular link-ups we've built up relationships with the Mary Sumner House leadership team, and with other Provincial Presidents; we've prayed together and shared our concerns and joys from country to country, branch to branch and member to member over the past 3 years. Phones and emails have worked overtime – praise God for technology!

Despite the Covid-19 interruption to our lives, it's been a time of strengthening relationships in different ways. As I write, people are talking about a Third Wave coming. For those of us living in Melbourne, this must be the Sixth or Seventh, at least! Just as we have begun to resume 'almost normal' lives, the threat erupts again. But MU members will lead the way in finding alternative expressions of 'being MU', and will help to keep the community well connected as they have before.

I'm sad that I haven't been able to travel more within Australia to encourage and to thank members personally for their powerful prayer and work for gender justice, peace and reconciliation, and self-sustainability using the principles of MULO in local situations. I encourage you to keep MULO foremost as you make plans.

With our current projects, we can certainly relate to younger generations today who have similar concerns. We are working for gender justice and for the prevention of violence against women in our 16 Days of Activism. We are focused on marriage and family life and yearn to see flourishing relationships bring peace and reconciliation. Our partnership with Anglican Overseas Aid demonstrates that we are indeed concerned about the environment – in the Overseas Target Project we are supporting Church and Community Disaster Resilience and Climate Change Management in the Pacific in Fiji and Tonga.

I'm convinced that we need to talk more openly and loudly about what MU does locally, and around the world – only then will we see new people in our communities catch the MU Vision.

We must read *Mia Mia*, our websites (both mothersunion.org and muaustralia.org.au) and our Diocesan newsletters to ensure we are well-informed to talk about the work that we are doing. Why not have a *Five-Minute-Focus* at each gathering when a member introduces and shares with others something new that they've learned about MU?

We must pray for more people to be willing to place their trust in God and accept leadership roles – challenging, but so rewarding! We must also look to alternative ways of 'doing MU'. All over the world MU groups meet for prayer every week and members go to the homes of the sick, offering prayer, food and social support to them. What is the need in your local community?

Transformation – NOW! is our theme for this year. How has this role transformed me? It's transformed my understanding of the incredible, life-changing work being done by MU members showing Christian care for family life in industrial, urban, rural and outback settings worldwide. I'm more aware of the depth of commitment to and the dependence on Jesus Christ that is shown by people in under-resourced countries. Both these issues continue to impact and transform my own spirituality and prayer-life.

I passionately believe that MU globally will continue to be a strong, energetic and dynamic movement – and a prayerful, supportive, and lively presence in local communities in whatever form or shape God chooses it to be.

I praise God, and thank you, for enabling me to be your Provincial President. It's an awesome role and the rewards have been, and still are, literally out of this world!

Anne Kennedy





The power of little gestures

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour:

If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Police arrested a 16-year-old girl and a female co-offender, who, they allege, approached a 76-year-old woman who was sitting in her car, having just finished shopping, at about 4.30pm on a Wednesday afternoon. The girls demanded that the woman hand over the vehicle, and when she refused, they pulled her out, punched her in the head several times and fled in the car. The elderly woman was transported to hospital where she was treated for bruising on her head and cuts and abrasions on her hands and arms.

The arrest came at the end of a week when several elderly Toowoomba residents were targeted by violent teenage offenders. Juvenile crime is making a worrying post-pandemic comeback and the issue of young people dangerously driving stolen cars, putting both themselves and other road users at risk, is a particularly frightening trend. This trend is not confined to my area. State governments around the country are working hard to find ways to address youth offending and keep the community safe.

One young Mum in our community felt we could do more to assure the victims of these crimes that they are not alone, that people in the community care about what had happened, and to try to help them feel safe again. A Facebook site promoting acts of kindness grew quickly as more and more community members wanted to help. Several local businesses pitched in with offers of security systems. Soon a wonderful 'care package' was ready to be delivered. More and more projects were suggested – small gifts for volunteers at the hospice, a care package for a lady diagnosed with cancer, and one for an elderly gentleman hospitalised after being assaulted by teens.



Photo credit: Reme Walle (Unsplash)

Community members are encouraged to share stories of any act of kindness, small or large, and it is wonderful to read of so much kindness and positivity – great opportunity to give thanks for those who are willing to help anyone they see who needs a smile, a helping hand, a word of encouragement. There have been stories about a courteous driver, someone helping to carry a mum's groceries and another paying for someone's coffee when their card didn't work! Small things that mean so much.

Critical posts are not allowed on this site. Yes, the community rightly expects young offenders to be held to account for their actions and for government to find real solutions, but this site plays an important role in promoting kindness and supporting those in need. I give thanks that the concern of one young woman has led to so much positivity in our area.

Does something like this exist in your community? If not, this might be something someone in your group may be able to consider.

Susan Skowronski



Lord, transform our community

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Although it was winter when I was writing this, while sitting in a carpark at a Medical Centre waiting for my neighbour whom I had taken to an appointment, I felt that it was like a spring day, with the sun shining, even though the air was crisp. It was an older area of our beautiful city of Ballarat, where I could see an array of wonderful old chimneys.

For a time I was transported back to my childhood with memories of the open fire-places and combustion stoves. They were associated with the comfort of home and family life.

Many old church buildings in country areas, including our former family church in Newlyn, still use a fireplace. The beautiful log fire on a cold day is so warm and welcoming when the community gathers. How many Mothers Union members would have met by an inviting fire on cold days to discuss and plan their activities?

These old chimneys, in most instances, are a reminder of times past, as the majority of modern homes no longer have them. Ballarat's main development was built on the back of a huge goldrush. It was also around the time Mothers' Union was formed, in England in the 1870's, then later here in Australia in 1892. Like Mothers' Union, chimneys have stood the test of time and seen the evolution of change and transformation.

As these chimneys remain visible in the community, so must we as Mothers Union in this

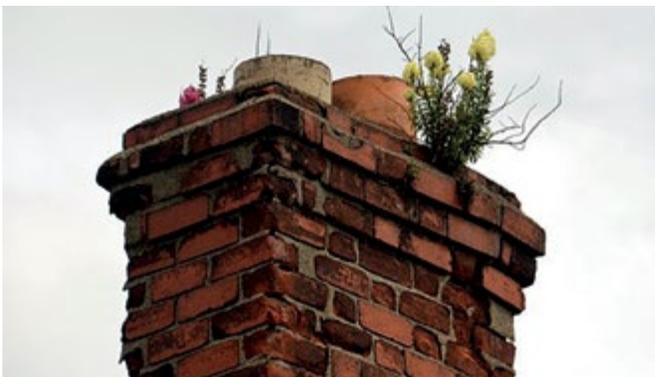


Photo credit: Pixabay

21st century. Depending on our demographic, it is often easier said than done to go out into the community or bring the community to us, especially where there may be obstacles and challenges. Over recent years different church denominations have come under a negative spot light, including in my home town.

Through a movement like ours, and as Christians, we need to bring about change and a confidence within our communities to bridge some gaps. There will be those who do not believe in Jesus, the son of God, but they can still learn a lot from his life on earth. He was caring and believed in love and kindness for all and showing respect for each other. Sometimes, individually, we may need to transform our own minds and thoughts before we can begin to transform others.

It is also important for the community to be able to come to the church by our also offering non-religious activities to bring people into our buildings for gatherings and events, perhaps by having a walking group which starts and finishes from the church or a free book exchange as well as our own participation in community events.

Whatever we do as Christians we are representing Jesus, setting an example and helping make His name known to others through our words and actions. We need to keep our minds and hearts vigilant to see where there is a need and act upon it by creating a vision of where we can take ourselves, including partnering with other groups, if necessary.

Spring is a time for new growth. In nature, this comes from the right combination of sunlight and water. For our spiritual lives, it comes from a combination of time with God in his word as well as time to gather with other Christians again in fellowship. Quite often those of us living in colder areas tend to hibernate! For the cycle of our butterfly, spring will see most emerge in their beauty, spread their wings and fly away into both the known and unknown world.

As members of Mothers Union let us *spring* forward in our faith and transformation as we look toward a new triennium in 2023.

Denise Lay



Transforming our community one thing at a time

According to the latest census figures, our nation is becoming less Christian. Mainly, this seems to be due to a growth in the number of people who claim to have no religion. How do we respond to this trend?

Well, at one level, there is no need to be too concerned. God is in charge and we can trust him. In the past many people were nominal Christians. It is better that people are honest; it may make them more willing to listen to the message about Jesus. However, it is a wake-up call for us. As Christians we are committed to transformation through Jesus and we need to ask ourselves how we can help our community be transformed by the story which we have.

The idea of transforming our community is a popular one. Most people seem to think that the answer to all problems lies with the government and the making of new laws. No doubt there is some truth in this, but our deepest problems are beyond law or money to fix. The real change has to come from the heart of the individual citizen. As Christians we are called by our Lord to be good neighbours, to love those around us. We are not to be self-centred, but other-person centred. If we wish to see our community transformed, it must start with us.

You may say, all this is true, but what can one person do to make any difference? Let me share a story.

There was once a young boy who liked to walk along the beach. One morning, when he got there, the tide-line was a mass of stranded starfish – thousands of them. He began to pick them up one at a time and throw them back in the water. An older and seemingly wiser person came along and said, 'Hey, what do you think you're doing?' to which the boy replied. 'I'm throwing them back so they don't die.' The older person said. 'But just look, there's thousands of them, you can't possibly make a difference.' The young boy, picking up another starfish, said, 'Well, mister, I'm sure making a difference to this one!' as he cast it back in the water.

Here is where we can trust God to take us and use us. Firstly, are there things which you can do in your own family to improve its life? Have people drifted apart and can you make that phone call which will see them come back together? Do your children need help with their children, and can you make yourself available? Are there books you can read and then recommend?

But secondly, it is not just our own family; there the families in our church. I have found that from time to time a younger parent will be only too glad to sit with an older person to share their problems and seek advice. We can talk to the children of the church and take an interest in them. As well as that, though, there is our street, our town. Are you a neighbour to those around you? Do you see their needs and ask if there is anything you can do to help them, even if it is only to be a safe person they can talk with? Or, perhaps there is a person in your street who has recently arrived in Australia and needs help in working out what to do to live here. Perhaps, too, such a person would value conversations in English so that they can begin to speak the language better.

Some friends of mine have come into contact with a man who lives nearby. He is alone and very



Our movement, Mothers' Union, has as its goal the transformation of family life according to the principles we read about in God's word. Families are the bedrock of a nation's life. This is where we shape the next generation, this is where we care for one another in times of suffering, this is where we are hospitable to others, this is where we find out about God.

Photo credit: Robin de Kesel on Unsplash



lonely. They have befriended him and asked him if he would like to go to church with them. He readily agreed and accompanied them the following Sunday. This happened several times. Now, when they cannot go, he takes himself to church and has made a whole group of new friends who can talk to him about the Lord Jesus, the greatest friend of all.

Being such a 'friend', along with the hospital visiting, court morning teas, visiting women's shelters, provision of toiletry packs, support for the homeless, sending greeting cards to women in prison and many other Mothers' Union projects is making a difference. Especially, though, people need to hear about Jesus. I don't mean that we have to ram our beliefs down people's throats. We need to treat our relationship with God and living for Jesus as a very natural part of our lives.

But most important of all is this. No matter what stage of life we may be at, we can always pray for our neighbours. Prayer expresses our weakness, and honours God's strength. It is the single most important thing we can do to transform our community and our nation. It is more important than passing laws or fixing systems. Others can appeal to the government; we can appeal to the one who is really in charge.

Do you pray for your neighbours? Do you walk up and down the street committing families to the Lord? That is the key to transformation – and you and I can do it.

Christine Jensen

A community project in Warwick

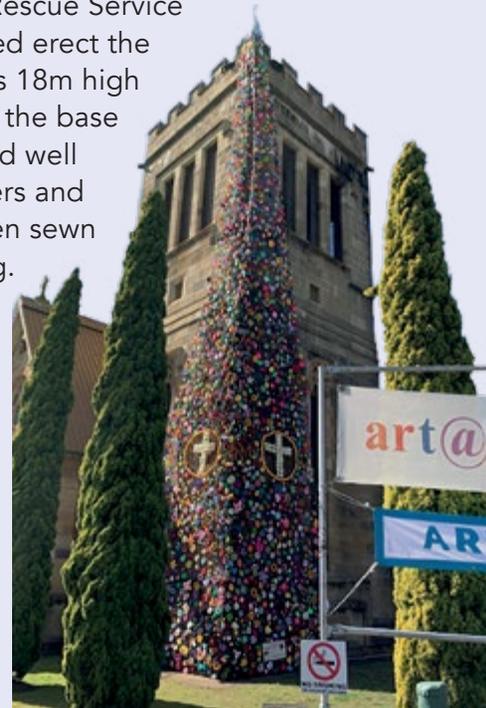
Each July the town of Warwick (Queensland) holds the 'Jumper and Jazz Festival'. This year, as part of the festival, St. Mark's Women's Guild decided to decorate the tower of St. Mark's church with a Flower Tower. This has proved to be a labour of love, not only for so many members of the Guild and parishioners, including AMUA members, but also for other people in the wider community. As the word got around even folk from all over our Diocese have wished to be part of this venture, and for their help we give our heartfelt thanks.

Our own AMUA President, Elaine Stewart, and her husband have certainly given many hours of their time and expertise to enable this idea to become a reality. After many months and many hours of willing helpers actually knitting, crocheting or sewing all the flowers, this mammoth task is at last completed. What an accomplishment, and how beautiful it looks! The fellowship that all have enjoyed while spending time together stitching all the flowers onto the netting has certainly proved to be a wonderful benefit to all.

This has truly been a community project. Local Fire and Rescue Service personnel helped erect the netting, which is 18m high and 6m wide at the base of the tower, and well over 2200 flowers and leaves have been sewn onto the netting.

Do come to Warwick some time to our Jumper & Jazz Festival. We would love to see you!

Joan Finlay





Connecting meaningfully

Photo credit: Blue Budgie from Pixabay



Late in May this year we packed our bags, drove to the airport and boarded a flight from Brisbane to Sydney. Then, more excitedly, we caught the transfer bus to the International Terminal and boarded a flight to Dallas Fort Worth airport in Texas, USA. Thus began a wonderful 3 weeks of reconnecting with grandsons, daughter and son-in-law, all of whom we had not hugged for 3 long years. It was a privilege and joy to be part of their everyday lives, discovering what was important to each person, especially considering the changes that had occurred in their lives as well as our lives, since we were last in each other's space. As you can imagine, many hugs were given and received during this visit. Physical, emotional and social connections are vitally important for our souls and our mental health.

As I write this article, the news is again reporting a new variant of COVID 19, this time in tandem with a 'bad flu season'. Both events signal the need for measures to reduce possible contact with others, potentially restricting travel, gathering in-person (luckily most of us can attend worship online) and certainly increasing the use of masks. While all these measures are necessary to reduce transmission, illness, hospitalisations and deaths, they can distance us from others. Yet, being members of Mothers Union gives us many opportunities to be connected and to reach out to others with the love of God.

Prayer is a powerful connection. Our prayer diaries enable us to pray daily for local, Australian and worldwide members of Mothers Union. I encourage your regular use of these resources. As I have done before, I ask you to pray for your own link dioceses in the spare day available in the MU worldwide prayer diary. While I acknowledge that communication with our links is not easy, especially in dioceses where we do not speak their language or the people are experiencing conflict. One way to make a useful connection is to search for these countries on the internet and identify their challenges, and then pray purposively for their needs.

It is important to stay connected to the word of God through prayerful listening to God and reading our bibles (along with a good commentary). Podcasts such as 'On the Way' and community lectures offered by our theological colleges (often streamed so you can watch at home) are other ways to stay connected with God and enrich our faith. The closing words of Matthew's gospel also direct us to connect with and share our faith with others. We have an example of such a connection in Acts 8:26-40 – the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip listened to the call of God to travel the road to Gaza. I have been on that road, and even now there is not a lot to commend such a journey. Yet, Philip goes without question and in the process connects with the eunuch, who is seeking to learn more of God through reading the writings of the prophet Isaiah. The eunuch asks, 'How can I [understand], unless someone guides me?'

As Christians, we need to recognise the times when people are seeking to know about the Christian faith and God, even though they may ask obscure questions and make claims that test our beliefs. While out walking with my teenage grandson many questions arose that stretched my thinking and my understanding of the faith. I recognised that it was important to value his perspective. I also had to consider more deeply what might be behind his questions and statements and try to meet his needs, not my own. Answering others' questions can be tricky, but we must be aware of what they are asking for or about and answer that, not provide an answer that just aligns with our expectations.

Connecting meaningfully at a time when we need to manage our interactions with family and the wider community takes careful thought and prayer. Perhaps you can share and discuss ways you are connecting meaningfully with God and others during your next branch meeting.

Robin Ray



An email, a yes and mutual gifts – six years as national prayer and spirituality co-ordinator

I have always taken 'calls' seriously. And by seriously I don't mean lots of pondering and praying, serious weighing of benefits, possible consequences and outcomes. No, no. A call requires a 'yes' – and then see how it goes. I've been practicing this way of life for 60 years now and my six years as P&S Coordinator have been a wondrous blessing.

It was the result of another call – as one recently widowed, needing somewhere to live in and on and with – I accepted the call to minister in the Diocese of Willochra. I knew no-one, I was 9 hours drive from my nearest daughter and grandchildren but I found a ministry in me. Then another stint of country ministry with 14 centres in and surrounding the Clare Valley.

Ministry, in the way of Anglican ordination, is about the care of souls and it seems that one soul was touched during my time, and, perhaps subsequently, for I led a retreat there and shortly afterwards I received an email from her asking if I would be interested in the P&S position.

I had no idea what it involved because, although I had become a member in about 1965, my wild and wonderful life had no opportunity or impetus for formal continuing involvement. At the time of my husband's theological training and ordination in the late 1970s Mothers' Union was considered by that generation of clergy in Adelaide and, I suspect, previous and subsequent generations, as not worth bothering about. But having previously answered a call to be Chaplain for the Diocese of Adelaide, I began a steep learning curve and developed a great passion for Mothers Union's mission and purpose and possibilities. So, you can see, when that other came, one which involved a great deal more commitment, I said, 'Yes, Lord, it is me, Lord. I heard you calling in the night' and wrote an application.

I had been further empowered for this for, when I had chosen to leave fulltime ministry and return to Adelaide to be near another daughter and family, my half-time position allowed me to do 4-year part-time course in Spiritual Direction. So, with the encouragement of another Willochra parishioner, Liz Harris, the sister of a close school friend AND then editor of *Mia Mia*, I went to the November

Australian Council, thinking I was there to 'test' my vocation. The rest, as they say, is history.

I have been so blessed by the opportunity to write and write and write. I have even started to keep the emails of thanks and appreciation, just for a reality check that it really is helpful.

I have loved steeping myself in Mothers' Union's mission – worldwide. I feel so close to all our members all over the world. (I feel rather lost, though, not having the name of a person in a diocese.) My one regret? I do wish I had made personal contact with more Prayer and Spirituality people at parish and diocesan level.

I have loved sharing my thoughts and prayers and learning and hymns with you all. My best moment was in a northern beach suburb of Perth, when visiting a parish way back when Kay Goldsworthy was made Archbishop, and there was Thought for the Week in the pew sheet. I was astonished. I don't know what I thought happened to them, but yet again, I was thankful, and full of admiration. It was so special. I used to be a librarian and our specialty is the dissemination of information. 'Well Done' and 'Congratulations' on that score and so many others to the wonderful organisation that is the Mothers' Union. Every blessing for the future, dear friends.

Lesley McLean

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you gave your life for us, help us to live for you. We offer to you all that we are and have; our thoughts and desires, our words and deeds. Lead us in the way of obedience and joy. Give us the power to make known your glorious Gospel to all people. For your sake we commit ourselves to you, in our homes and parishes, in Mothers Union and wherever you may call us to serve you. Amen.

Taken from *A Worship and Prayer Book*
for MU Australia, p 73

My life as an AMUA Vice President

Shortly after I was elected to the AMUA Executive as Vice President (Junior), Anne Kennedy, our President, asked if I would take on Social Issues and Action, as no one had been elected for that position.

It's always hard saying no to a request from the President, and so I accepted the position, and it proved to be an enriching experience. My aim was to encourage Mothers Union members to think, act and pray on the impact of the world both on its own members but also on the well-being of the community. This involved addressing issues affecting marriage and family life, and not least the disadvantaged and helpless.

I addressed issues such as gambling, domestic violence and dementia, and petitioned the Prime Minister on behalf of AMUA, requesting him to implement a program to provide families with protection against pornography. I then encouraged members to write their own letters. The government did respond positively to that request and protections have now been put in place. I had never occupied a role like this before, but members sent me emails and letters when what had been written had been helpful, which I really appreciated.

After three years Susan Skowronski took up that responsibility, and so for the last three years I have

been looking after social media, with Kaylene Vlasveld. The aim is twofold: to increase AMUA's presence and also to encourage prayer support for the work of Mothers Union in Australia and worldwide.

I post the 'Thought for Week' by Lesley Maclean on our two Facebook groups, MU Australia and Mothers Union Australia, each week. We often we get responses from members overseas, including the Worldwide President, Sheran Harper. Almost as soon as I post them on Saturday night members are indicating they 'like' them.

One of the highlights was when Susan Skowronski and I worked together on daily posts for the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' last year. Each day I posted a Bible text on a picture provided by Susan with an accompanying prayer. We had hundreds of followers during that time, many of whom were not Mothers Union members,

As well, there has been the opportunity to encourage prayer for the urgent needs that are being faced by members as they have been overwhelmed by the floods, fire and drought which have swept across Australia in recent times.

Thank you, for the opportunity to serve Mothers Union Australia during these past six years. The impact of COVID has changed our lives and made us ever more conscious that our lives are in God's hand. It has been an honour to be involved in these ways.

Christine

Triennial elections for AMUA

Many of you will hold elections this year for your Executive Committees, as will Australian Council. Do pray about who you might vote for, and listen to the still, small voice of God as you discern who might be best to fill the vacant positions.

It is AMUA policy that a person can hold a position for 3 years, and then be elected for a further 3 years only. The reasons for this are firstly, so that no-one receives a 'life-sentence'; secondly, new ideas and voices can contribute to the work of MU continually and thirdly that there is a succession plan for every position, i.e. you are training someone to take over your job.

Sometimes a replacement isn't obvious. Is God asking you to look outside your membership to bring someone new into a role for which they have the skills and expertise needed? Sometimes a fresh look can help a group stuck in a rut, and reinvigorate its thinking and its actions.

People can feel inadequate to fill the shoes of an outgoing Executive member. But remember that each of us has God-given gifts which are all different. No-one expects a clone to step up – it's the contribution of each individual that makes a successful team.

So, if you are approached to take on a new role, someone has faith that you can do it! Give it a go!

Denise reflects on her time as Promotion and Development Coordinator

It is hard to believe that this year ends my 6-year term as Promotion and Development Co-ordinator. When first invited to nominate, I was very hesitant, being a worker as well as carer for my elderly mother, who then unexpectedly passed away. So, after prayerful thought and speaking with my Diocesan President I made the decision.

Attending our Conference in Launceston, Tasmania, including meeting our then Worldwide President, Lynne Tembey, along with many other members, was a wonderful introduction to becoming part of the Australian Executive, who have been very supportive; we are family.

I have gained a greater understanding of how we work in decision-making, not only for Australia but overseas, including through Mary Sumner House. Australian Council meetings are very special and important for bringing members together for prayer, discussion and decision making. For the Promotion department, 2017 came at a time of a name and logo change, along with new merchandise, all of which initially met with a mixed response.

A highlight was attending the 2018 MULOA Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, for Zone C. This saw a wonderful gathering of cultures for workshops, celebration and prayer, with new friendships formed. A follow-up in 2019 was held in Brisbane.

Putting together newsletters and articles for *Mia Mia* is rewarding, and even challenging at times, and I have often asked God for guidance



to help the thought-waves. I did enjoy speaking to groups in Victorian dioceses, however, sadly, an invitation to Newcastle Diocese in NSW was twice postponed owing to Covid. Interacting with other Diocesan Promotion and Development Co-ordinators and Diocesan Presidents has been another important part of the position.

As part of *Transformation Now!* and to help address the issue of declining membership I believe the way forward for Promotion and Development is to be more accessible through social media outlets, which highlights the need for someone with good understanding and knowledge in this area to take up this role. I strongly encourage younger members to consider nominating for positions on Australian Executive, as it is such a rewarding experience.

1 Peter 4:10 Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts of grace.

Thanks be to God.

Denise

From the Publication Department

There are 2 Christmas card designs for this year. You may have seen the gold and blue card before, and as we have quite a number still in stock, this will be one of the available designs.

The other card is new, and follows on with the butterfly design as used in the free prayer cards recently printed.

These Christmas cards, large and small diaries, and the Australian bird calendar can be ordered from the Publications representative in your diocese.

Rob Kennedy



Praying with Purpose: A Bible reflection on being persistent in prayer

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'"

"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will

see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:1-8 (NIV)



Jesus told them a story showing that it was necessary for them to pray consistently and never quit. He said, "There was once a judge in some city who never gave God a thought and cared nothing for people. A widow in that city kept after him: 'My rights are being violated. Protect me!'

"He never gave her the time of day. But after this went on and on he said to himself, 'I care nothing what God thinks, even less what people think. But because this widow won't quit badgering me, I'd better do something and see that she gets justice—otherwise I'm going to end up beaten black-and-blue by her pounding.'" Then

the Master said, "Do you hear what that judge, corrupt as he is, is saying? So what makes you think God won't step in and work justice for his chosen people, who continue to cry out for help? Won't he stick up for them? I assure you, he will. He will not drag his feet. But how much of that kind of persistent faith will the Son of Man find on the earth when he returns?"

Luke 18:1-8 (The Message)

To consider:

In the time of Jesus the telling of parables was a common teaching tool employed by the Rabbis. Throughout his own ministry Jesus regularly taught through parables, a teaching style very familiar therefore to his listeners.

"Jesus' vivid parables captured attention, challenged assumptions, invited audiences to see reality from a different perspective, and provoked further reflection."

J. Bowker



At the beginning of this parable Jesus explicitly states his reason for telling the story: that is, that we should always pray and not give up. As with all his stories, however, there are many facets to explore and a multitude of layers to uncover.

Take some time to reflect on the two versions of the parable and then consider the following thoughts:

The status of a widow in Jewish society was one of powerlessness and fragility.

- *For what reason might Jesus have used such a character as an example of persistence in prayer?*
- *What encouragement to pray can we gain from this character?*

This parable is an example of the “how much the more” illustration that Jesus regularly uses in his teaching i.e. if an unjust, flawed character as this judge could be swayed by persistent intercession, how much the more will God, who is perfect, look favourably on our pleas.

- *In comparing and contrasting the judge with our perfect Father what do we discover about the character of God and his attitude to our prayers?*
- *What encouragement to pray can we gain from this contrast?*

Jesus’ emphasis on the widow’s persistence in this parable links with his teaching on prayer in Luke 11.



“So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.

For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives; and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds; and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened.”

Luke 11:9-10 (Amplified Bible)

- *What encouragement to pray can we gain from this teaching?*

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Change that spreads

I saw the gospel before I ever heard the gospel. I was a troubled teenager, living in a home with domestic violence, and totally unchurched. Having been invited to attend a Christian youth group, I went ... and I saw the gospel.

I saw the gospel in the lives of the youth group leaders who had hope and joy and love. They were different from anyone I had ever met before. The way they lived and loved (even me) expressed something I did not understand. They had been transformed to the extent that their lives spoke volumes. I saw, I listened, and then I met Jesus.

In John 4 we find a group of people who also saw and listened and then met Jesus. Unlike my experience, theirs took place over 2000 years ago in a Samaritan town called Sychar. The person who introduced them to Jesus was not a youth group leader, but a woman who met Jesus at a well. You might know her as ‘the Samaritan woman’, and we can read about her encounter with Jesus and the townspeople in John 4:1-42.

The story is extraordinary on many levels.

Facing opposition and rejection in Judea, Jesus decided to return to Galilee. The route through Samaria was the most direct, but not the most desirable. Samaritans were regarded by Jews as despised half-castes, racially and religiously contaminated. Most Jews would take the long route around Samaria. But not Jesus. He chose to go directly through the land of these seemingly-despised people.

What’s more, he chose to make direct contact with a Samaritan woman at the well. The fact that Jesus – a Jewish man – would even speak with a woman in public, and a Samaritan woman at that, would be culturally shocking enough. But as the story unfolds, we discover that this woman has a reputation. She is unnamed, but she is known.

The townspeople know her. She has had 5 previous husbands and is now living in adultery. It seems that she is ostracised by the people of her town. She has come to the well to draw water alone and at midday, the hottest part

of the day. She's not with the other women of the town, who usually came in groups to draw water in the morning. This woman doesn't appear to have much going for her. She's a woman in a male-oriented culture; she's a half-caste Samaritan, and she's quite likely a social outcast.

Jesus knows exactly who this woman is. He knows about her morally messy past. And yet, this is the very person whom Jesus approaches and offers the greatest gift possible.

The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is rather interesting. They are discussing water, a very valuable commodity in a dry land. And Jesus makes her a very attractive offer – he offers her a life-changing gift of living water.

The woman totally misunderstands and thinks he is talking about a freshly running water supply – a spring or a river – something very appealing, given how difficult water was to come by. Normally she had to work very hard to draw water up a well that was probably over 100 feet deep, and then carry it home. A source of fresh flowing water ... yes, she would be interested in that!

But the living water that Jesus is offering is something altogether different. It is water that quenches thirst forever, he says. Once a person has tasted this, they will never need to find any other means of quenching their thirst; their need will be satisfied.

No wonder the woman is confused! Jesus has shifted the conversation to a whole different plane. She needs physical water, yes, but Jesus knows that she has a much deeper need. When she drinks the water from the well her need will be satisfied temporarily, but she will get thirsty again. Her deeper need is spiritual and relational.

What Jesus offers her is a relationship with himself that leads to eternal life, life forever in right relationship with God. This, not the water from the well, is what will ultimately and permanently satisfy her deepest needs. This is where she will find real and lasting hope and joy and love. Not in the arms of another husband, but in relationship with Jesus. And he offers it to her as a free gift.

How does she respond to Jesus's offer?

Her meeting with Jesus brings about a life-change in this woman. No longer is she focussed on getting water from the well; she leaves her water jar there

and heads back to town. No longer is she alone; she goes directly to the townspeople to share what has happened to her. No longer is she hopeless; she has exciting news to share with them. 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' (John 4:29).

I wonder what the townspeople saw when she came to them. Did they see a changed woman? If, as we suspect, she was a social outcast, why did they even listen to her story? I think there must have been something different about her after meeting Jesus. There must have been something that grabbed their attention.

And listen they did. They saw, they listened, and they came to meet Jesus for themselves. The change that started with the unnamed woman of Samaria spread to the people of Sychar. Look at what they say to the woman in John 4:42: 'We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.'

How amazing that Jesus, having been rejected by many of his own people in Judea, is now reaping a harvest among the Samaritans!

If I were Jesus, I probably wouldn't have chosen the Samaritan woman to be the instrument of change for her community. I think I would have looked for a fine, upstanding citizen, and, given the culture of the time, probably a man. But Jesus chooses the most unlikely person – a woman who remains nameless, but whose impact for the gospel is enormous.

God also chooses us, unlikely candidates in many ways, to be his instruments of gospel change in this world. May our lives be such that, through us, others will see and hear and meet Jesus.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

Read John 4: 1-42 and consider the following questions:

1. How did the woman's encounter with Jesus at the well impact her?
2. How have you responded to Jesus's life-changing offer of living water?
3. In what way/s does the example of the Samaritan woman encourage or challenge you?



Sharon Kirk

Thread Together – new life for new clothes



Thread Together was founded in 2012 by Andie Halas, former owner of Sea Folly, who saw that many clothing companies had enormous wastage of brand-new clothing which was going to landfill. She wanted to direct this wastage to the many people in need. Based in Sydney, Thread Together collaborates with some of Australia's largest clothing suppliers and manufacturers like Myer, Bonds, Sportscraft and David Jones, providing their

clothing to social service agencies and charities such as Anglicare, St Vincent de Paul and The Salvation Army. Thread Together has been able to change the future of people in crisis, as well as the future lifecycle of clothing and accessories. There are numerous charities and organisations that cater to providing shelter and food; however, Thread Together is the only major organisation that redistributes excess new clothing to those who need it.

Thread Together in Queensland is operated as a 3-way partnership between Thread Together, Anglicare Southern Queensland and St Andrew's Anglican Church, Indooroopilly.

One of our parishioners, who is also an AMUA member, is employed by Anglicare to run the Thread Together operation from our parish. We have a brightly coloured van which contains all the clothing needed for the sites that it will visit. We provide brand-new hats, shoes, trousers, shirts, blouses, underwear, jackets, jumpers and lots more. In this way Thread Together is saving new clothing from going to landfill and providing clothes to people in need.

The Brisbane operation

We have 63 volunteers from many different sections of the community, including our own parishioners, which also include Mothers' Union members from Indooroopilly branch. When the items that we have ordered from the Thread Together Sydney warehouse arrive at the rectory garage a team of volunteers unpacks and sorts the articles into their categories. The van is packed with appropriate items for the recipients at the next site visit. A volunteer driver and two stylists go to the site and help the folk in need to choose their items. Other volunteers donate paper carry bags which can be filled to brimming for the client. For people in desperate need this service provides dignity and self-worth as they receive brand-new articles of their choosing, and in most cases, as many items as they need. Circumstances and disadvantage should not prevent people from accessing clothing to allow them to realise their full potential.

The purpose-built shelving and storage which was built (also by volunteers) in Rev'd Sue's garage has been outgrown by the amount of clothing we now need to keep onsite. So, a new by-referral clothing hub will be opened in the undercroft of St Andrew's church to complement the mobile clothing service. It will be a lovely, warm space where customers can choose whatever they require from the vast array of items available, have a comforting conversation and, if desired, a cup of tea or coffee.

Thread Together visits many sites which serve the needs of people from many different backgrounds and with many different needs. Agencies assisting people who are doing it tough in metro, regional or remote areas of Queensland can also apply to become a Thread Together partner. That way you can place orders for new clothing directly on the Thread Together online portal and have items delivered free to your door. Contact Kate for help (klittmann-kelly@anglicaresq.org.au)

This work comes under AMUA's fifth objective: to help those whose family life has met with adversity.

Helen Zappala

President Indooroopilly,
North West Deanery President

From fashion design to prison

Back in 2002 when I was studying fashion design if you had told me I would be working as a prison and community chaplain in the future I would have laughed...and then run away! It's so amazing for me to reflect on how God has changed my heart over the years and how He uses the gifts He has given for His glory.

I am the Anglican Chaplain at Tarrengower low security women's prison in Maldon, Victoria and the Coordinator of MinisTree Bendigo. MinisTree Bendigo was born during Covid 2021, when I was given the opportunity to dream up ways of offering chaplaincy on the streets of Bendigo's CBD to rough sleepers and shop owners.

How did I get from fashion design to here? It's a long story, full of God's amazing twists and turns, so let's fast-forward to early 2019 when I began working with the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo, hoping to be ordained. One day Bishop Matt Brain called to ask if I'd consider taking up the chaplaincy position at Tarrengower prison. I was petrified and wanted to say 'no', but I have always felt compelled to be brave. Eventually I said 'yes'. The first time I visited Tarrengower I sat in on a bible study and an arts and crafts activity night. It surprised me that Tarrengower looked and felt so different to what I thought a prison would be like; Tarrengower looks a lot like a school camp but with security. That night I had a brief conversation with a lady who asked me if I was going to buy McDonalds on the way home! We had a laugh and she told me how much she missed eating McDonalds. As I exited Tarrengower that night I was told that the woman I had been talking to was in prison because she had killed someone. I was completely shocked! On the way home God challenged me about His grace and how it is for all people, He asked me whether I could forgive the women in prison just as He forgives the women. I clearly had the sense that if I were to become a prison chaplain, I would have to extend God's grace to others just as it is extended to me through Jesus. I am pleased to say that I am now in my fourth year at Tarrengower, and although it is challenging at times, and emotionally draining, it is such a joy and honour for me to work alongside these women.

I can now see how God was preparing me through prison chaplaincy to work in the community, on the streets of Bendigo.

Offering chaplaincy is offering dignity. If every person is made in the image of God, then we need to be able to 'love our neighbour as ourselves' (Mark 12:31), because we each bear the image of Christ. This means loving all people, whether housed or homeless, clean or unclean, criminal or innocent. I have found the best way to do this is to listen with an open heart to the stories of the people I encounter and to try not to cast judgements. You will have heard the saying 'we have two ears and one mouth so let's listen twice as much as we speak!' Chaplaincy is also about offering deep listening and about relationship building and trust. Relationship building takes time and on the street building trust doesn't happen overnight. I have found the best way for me to build relationships is to be a reliable, visible presence on the street, to approach people with genuine interest and concern for their wellbeing and give them space to talk.

MinisTree Bendigo helps the people we meet in small ways. I always carry a bag with some individually wrapped snacks (like muesli bars), warm beanies, scarves and gloves and a blanket, ready to give away if needed. But the best thing I can give someone is dignity, trust, and my listening ears – and of course the Love of God.

Christians can offer these things because we have the love of Christ in us and we personally know God's grace. Not all are called to be street chaplains, but we are all called to love our neighbours. I firmly believe this will change communities.

I encourage you to find your local charity and ask what donations they need most; is it knitted goods in winter or is it your time as a volunteer?

Fiona Preston



In Mary Sumner's footsteps: the story of Mary Sumner

It all started when Mary, married to George, Rector of the Parish of Old Alresford, was passionate about transforming the home-lives of Parish families, by helping the women to support one another in raising their children.

Her husband was very supportive: *"just share your heart – God will do the rest."*

She was so nervous at the first meeting of the parish women, that she refused to speak, and asked George to take her place. In those days, it was very unusual for a woman to be a public speaker. However, George encouraged her to speak from the heart and it went so well that she found the courage to speak at future meetings. Her talks were inspired by her faith – it was practical and down to earth – *"Remember, Ladies, to be yourselves what you would have your children be"*.



After groups with women became well established, she was asked to speak to the men of the Parish. Again, she was apprehensive, but agreed, and helped them to be more aware of what their wives did for them, to show more respect and love.

The meetings grew, and included women - old and young, rich and poor. Others heard about her work, and started groups in their own areas.

In 1876, she founded "the Union of Mothers" – with a membership card and promise: "to be given up, body and soul, to Jesus Christ in Holy Baptism, and that your duty is to train your children for his service".

In 1885, at a time when it was still unheard of for women to speak to large audiences, Mary Sumner was invited by the Presiding Bishop to speak to a packed church congress session for women in Portsmouth. He anointed her with the authority to speak - he felt that he had no authority to speak to a group of women whose prime concern was to get enough food on the table so that the children would not starve. She overcame her nerves again. *"Together, by the Grace of God... we can calm each other when we are afraid; strengthen one another when we are weak; and work together to raise our children to the glory of God. Unity is strength"*.

The movement grew further, increasingly with the support of bishops, internationally as well as in England. Some key principles were developed, including:

That the prosperity of a nation springs from the family life in its homes

That family life is the greatest institution in the world for the formation of the character of children

That faith is the foundation of family life

That the tone of family life depends upon the married life of the parents – and ultimately, that example is stronger than precept

As the movement continued to grow, Mary Sumner asked herself what its purpose really was, and what it should strive for. She reflected: *"A true home*

should be a light-house, shedding its quiet beams far and wide" – her dream was for every home to be filled with the light and love of Jesus, and for the movement to unite many hearts in many lands, nurturing healthy environments for little children.

And she was a living example of what she preached. From 1900 onwards, she and the members started to advocate on issues of key importance to families and children – she campaigned to stop children collecting alcohol from public houses for their families, and for the age of marriage for girls to be raised from 12 to 16. She was not afraid to speak up on difficult issues, despite resistance from members of the establishment.

She was also not afraid to act outside the social norms, to do what she believed to be right. At a time when unmarried girls with children were condemned and cast out, she cared for and protected her niece and her illegitimate son.

When she died in August, 1921, 4,000 women attended her funeral, which was a service of Thanksgiving. The last memory was one of her, on her feet in the sunlight, praising God.

She could not have conceived how the seeds which she planted would grow into a movement 4 million strong today, of members in 83 countries putting their faith into action to nurture healthy relationships in families and communities and to fight for social justice.

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Transformational listening

'I just listened'. A woman was telling me about a conversation that had significantly benefitted another person. She had not yet understood the power of listening and thought that everyone automatically did listening. Sadly, listening has become a lost art. Many conversations are exchanges of influence or mindless passing of time. In such conversations the person hears briefly only to start preparing their reply or recalling some story or some message.

As believers and followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be intentionally counter-cultural in the way we run our lives. This includes listening. Jesus models for us a high standard of listening by not interrupting, not talking about himself when the other is speaking and not trying to win superiority by retelling a more thrilling experience. He practised advanced listening skills as he listened to the person and to his heavenly father at the same moment.

How can we listen more like Jesus? What attitudes and skills need to be developed? There has been much written on listening. Search the word on the internet and you will find articles, lists and pretty sayings. The one that I am trying to put into practice at the moment is from Susan De Campo, Director and founder of LifeCare Consultancy:

Old Man

Old man with a cane
stumbles over invisible hurdles
gazes into nowhere
lost in his own thoughts,

Is he dreaming of yesteryear
or concerned about tomorrow?
Is his life easy or hard?
Stimulating or meaningless?

He passes by
and fades from my sight.

©Susan Skowronski 2017
Pic: Old Man (Sammy Sander from Pixabay)



Photo credit: Sammy Sander on Pixabay

Listening is not just etiquette.

It is a way of loving, honouring and respecting.

It's a way of bonding and connecting.

It's a way of sharing ourselves and our humanity.

*Listen with compassion, understanding
and intention.*

Be patient and authentic.

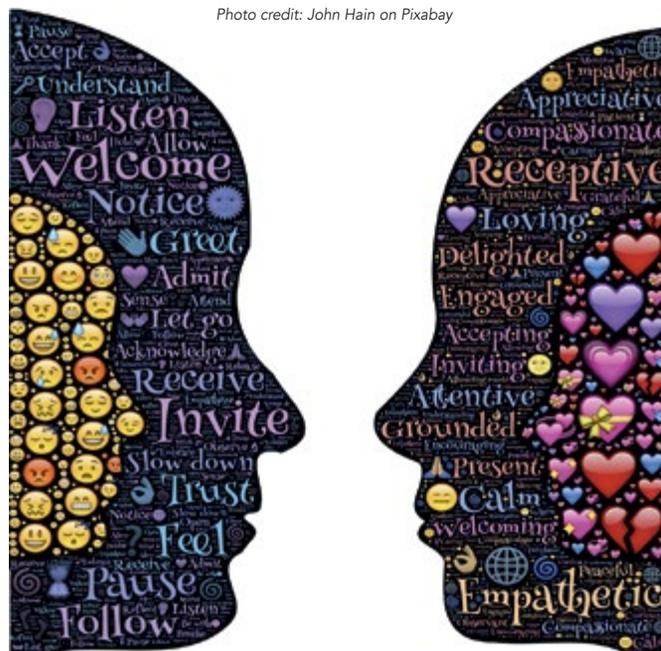
Listening, then, takes up all of our attention and much of our energy. We need to pay attention and then stay focussed on the person and not just what is being said. We will use our eyes and other senses to fully receive what is offered to us. We use intuition and discernment to identify the most significant issue. For example, hearing the words 'My dog died last week from a heart attack' would be sad enough. If the dog were an assistance dog, then the effect on the wellbeing of the person would be critically disabling.

The tough part of this quotation, for me, concerns what flows from me to the other person. How well am I doing at bonding and connecting with the person through sharing something of myself and my human frailty? What does being authentic mean here? It starts with honesty. If you are asked, 'Do you understand?', I suggest 'I'm trying to' or 'I want to and am struggling' or 'I think I get it'.

Empathy is the ability to share and understand the emotions of others. The person feels scared or feels the other's pain strongly within themselves when seeing the other's fear or pain. However, it is important to retain a strong sense of self and remain aware that you are experiencing another's feeling which is not your own. One risk of practising empathy is that we carry another's feelings with us after the conversation has finished. The second risk is that we feel overwhelmed by the complexity or intensity of the feelings that we are sensing.

We must keep hold of limits or boundaries to our practice of empathy. When the intentional conversation finishes, we check within ourselves for any feelings being carried that do not belong to us. We address the feeling and announce that the feeling belongs to the other person or ask Jesus to take away the unwanted left-over feeling. Jesus invites us to bring to him our burdens and leave them behind with him as we walk away. We prevent becoming overwhelmed by others' feelings by limiting our level of empathy, or

Photo credit: John Hain on Pixabay



limiting the amount of time that we listen. It is a mistake to allow our desire to offer pastoral care to overrule our boundaries and so put ourselves at risk of overwhelm. Another boundary we might keep in place is to become aware when the other's feeling is connecting to our own. For example, if I am recently bereaved, I would choose to not listen too deeply to another's bereavement feelings. The danger of cross-over is too great. Another example: I can feel comfortable listening to a patient in hospital coming to terms with a diagnosis of a terminal illness only because my own thoughts, beliefs and feelings about my own health and death are somewhat resolved.

Self-awareness is really useful when deeply listening to another. I know that I am passionate about justice. Sometimes, however, it is a vulnerable part of me and triggers the feeling of anger when I hear stories from victims of injustice. The other person's feeling has triggered a response in me. By recognising the trigger and accepting the unwelcome feeling inside, we can remain focussed on our listening again.



Listening has a very powerful effect, both on you and on the other person. We do our listening to the best of our ability, mindful of the pitfalls and trusting in the Holy Spirit to guide and protect us.

Peter Dyke

Reflections of a Christian businessman

I have been in business for 50 years, and I believe that this has been my calling and my ministry. The essence of being a Christian in business is really no different, as I see it, to being a Christian in any community.

When asked recently to give a short talk to some business colleagues, I came up with the following 'Six Ps of business'.

PRODUCT PRICE, PROMOTION, PROFIT
PERSEVERANCE, PRAYER

Prayer is a critical component of numerous business decisions as well as personal decisions.

God's Word is full of promises made by God to His people (that is you and me, regardless of occupation or calling). I once learned the phrase, 'If it matters to me, it matters to God'.

To my original 'Six P's', I would add another:
PARADOX

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'paradox' as 'a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true.'

I once had paradox explained as being very much like a violin string. While one end is fixed, the correct adjustment of the tension on the string enables us to make beautiful music. In business, this is most evident in the sphere of profit-making and wealth creation. Unless a business is profitable it cannot be sustained. Budgets set can only be realised if the price of the product is something that customers are willing to pay, and provided revenue received is higher than the costs of production, meaning that the 'bottom line' is in the black.



Photo credit:
Zhviko Dimitrov on Pixabay

Household budgets or church budgets are the same. It was Mr Micawber in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* who stated, 'Annual income 20 pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds 19 shillings and six pence, result happiness. Annual income 20 pounds, annual expenditure 20 pounds, ought and six, result misery'.

Space does not allow me to expand on the concept of paradox, but here are a few Bible references to help us look at both ends of our violin string to get the right tension.

Please note that I am not including moral issues in this discussion. The commandment about not stealing is not part of the paradox, nor is covetousness and not putting God in His rightful place as Lord of our lives. These are givens.

Matthew 8:20: Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.'

Matthew 19:22-24: 'When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he was very rich.²³ Jesus then said to his disciples, "I assure you: it will be very hard for rich people to enter the Kingdom of heaven. ²⁴I repeat: it is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.'

Malachi 3:6-12: 'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.'

Proverbs 6:6-11: 'Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise.'

Psalms 128:1-2: 'Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in obedience to him. You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings and prosperity will be yours.'

1 Timothy 6:6-10: 'But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.'



Business or everyday life? Working or retirement? God's principles and purposes are for all ages and all people.

John Cronshaw



Over the Fence

Great expectations

It had been a tight morning. Getting five young children to church on time required serious fore-thought, a three-hour lead-in and a logistics operation that would have made the UN proud. With total understanding, I gave consideration to the myriad of reasons that consistently saw our young families arriving during the last verse of the second song: the Sunday morning toddler temper tantrum, a catastrophic nappy event or - the sudden discovery that the quietest child had actually been left behind.

With our house being directly adjacent to church, there was no hiding my pre-church preparations. Blessed with an enormous child-friendly yard, our home underwent a weekly metamorphosis into crèche each Sunday morning. This involved the usual tasks of sweeping and removing choking hazards, selecting toys and books as well as the temporary re-location of all things canine, including the canines themselves. For some years our family had been augmented by Dug the Labrador, who we loved dearly for his loyalty, good-naturedness and notable lack of cognitive abilities. Our family's canine cohort had recently expanded with the arrival of Stanley the Beagle, who brought with him speed, the brains of an entire Military Intelligence Unit and a remarkable ability to climb trees.

I had spent the morning feeding babies, ensuring that Weetbix and toddlers had formed a meaningful union and taking both dogs for a walk (separately to avoid a guaranteed public shaming). Wiping the sweat from my forehead, and clad in runners and trackie pants, I entered the front yard for the final pre-church task. I swiftly and confidently inverted my plastic bag in readiness to scoop up any miscreant canine business, and allowed myself a moment of silent self-congratulation.

It was stunningly short-lived. A couple approached on the other side of the fence. Beautifully groomed, they walked uprightly at an unhurried

pace that spoke of preparedness, inner peace and of having had an excellent sleep the night before, with the full expectation of many more to come. With great speed Dug and Stanley launched at the couple. Up and down the fence they went, tracking the couple's every step with an agonisingly embarrassing display of barking and slobbering. I stood there helplessly, clutching my (now filled) plastic bag. Dug had assumed the persona of his action-hero Kujo whilst Stanley was clearly living out his ultimate fantasy of starring in *Border Security*.

Over the tremendous noise, I heard one slowly-spoken statement very clearly. 'I wouldn't have expected that from the *minister's* dogs.' Occasionally, to my shame, retorts rise fast. I heard myself say, 'What did you expect them to do, hand out the bulletins?' My comment mercifully muffled by the constant barking, I uttered some false apology and retreated. A giggle erupted, as I murmured my brilliant witticism to myself repeatedly. I imagined Dug and Stanley in the vestry – standing upright, bi-pedally as it were – handing out the pew sheets with great solemnity and moment – perhaps each even wearing a little vest of some sort?

I went inside full of adrenalin. Ten minutes later, I felt several less-exhilarating emotions. I sat, disturbed. Why had they not expected our dogs to behave like other dogs? What bearing did our vocation have on our mutts' behaviour? More worryingly, if people had such high expectations of an empty-headed Labrador and a neurotic



Beagle, how far did these expectations reach? To our garden? To our children? To us??

Somehow the spark had gone out of the morning. I gave half-hearted instructions to various children, changed out of my tracksuit pants and removed our dogs from the destroyed agapanthus bed where they were happily hunting for lizards. With only their joyful rear-ends visible, I reviewed their previous behaviour. It was undeniable – they had not behaved perfectly. They had failed to meet the expectations of others who, may I say, neither knew them nor loved them. They had, in fact, been completely true to their imperfect – I hunted for the right word – dogginess.

This thought developed. Perhaps, buried deep in their furry brains, lay some wisdom. Dug and Stanley would never be perfect. They would, in true canine fashion, test the patience of their family and neighbours on a daily basis. It was inevitable that some days would involve time-outs and other such disciplines reserved for truly reprehensible doggy behaviour. But no matter how many barbecue covers they chewed, or how many excavation sites appeared in my veg patch, grace and forgiveness would mean that they would always be part of our family. Could I not take something from this also? I reflected on the truth that expectations of perfection are burdensome and unattainable in equal measure. True for doggies, true for me. I allowed my thoughts to run. Could having high expectations of others lead us away from being realistic about our own and others' imperfections – and even worse – lead us away from the cross of Jesus?

Leaving canine redemption theology firmly to one side and brightened by this unexpected theological insight, my heart lifted. I imperfectly rebuked a child, imperfectly cleaned a bench and imperfectly threw on some lipstick. Time for church.

'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'

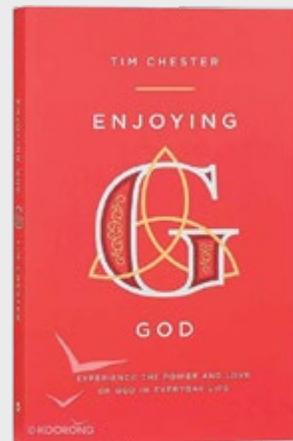
1 John 1:8-9

Virginia Grice

From my bookshelf

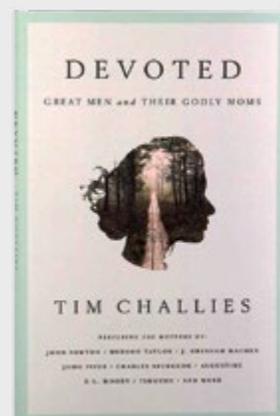
If spring weather is tempting you outside to enjoy a good book in the sunshine, here are several which I have enjoyed recently.

Enjoying God by Tim Chester is a very easy-to-read encouragement to get to know God more and to enjoy him more. Using the experiences of Mike and Emma, a fictitious married couple, Chester explores what it means to enjoy the Father's generosity, formation, and welcome; the Son's grace, presence and touch and the Spirit's life, help and voice. Each chapter concludes with a 'Putting it into practice' section and some questions for reflection, which make the book very practical, and suitable for sharing with others in a discussion group.



Enjoying God; experience the power and love of God in everyday life is published by The Good Book Company, 2018

Devoted by Tim Challies is a collection of 11 short biographies of well-known Christian men, including Augustine, Charles Spurgeon, John Newton and Hudson Taylor, which focus on the role their mothers played in their Christian formation. Each story is followed by a reflection written by a modern-day mother and some questions for personal reflection. Every mother's situation and gifts were different, and few were spectacular, but



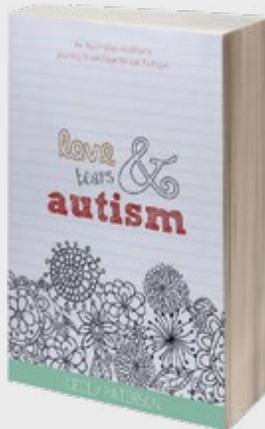
each woman was prayerful and deliberate in her parenting. This would be a great book to share with mothers who feel weak or who are raising their children without the support of a spouse. There's even encouragement (in the story of Christopher Yuan) for those whose adult children don't profess Christ. MU groups might find this book useful as a prompt to pray for their own, or other's, families.

Devoted; great men and Their Godly Moms is published by Cruciform Press, 2018

Love, tears and autism by Australian author, Cecily Paterson, moved me to tears. Not only did it open my eyes regarding the day-to-day struggles experienced by the families of children who are diagnosed with autism (and, by extension, other special needs), but it also caused me to repent of my ignorance and failure to understand these struggles. I rejoiced when Cecily spoke of her son's triumphs and progress, but perhaps even more importantly, I was reminded that loving is often painful, and families of children with special needs need all of us in the church to care enough to offer practical help without judgement. As well as sharing some of the pains and joys of the early years of her son's life, Cecily provides a very helpful Appendix of resources which may be of interest to parents, grand-parents and carers (including church members) of children on the autism spectrum. I think this is an important book for everyone to read so that we might gain an insight into the challenges facing families of children with special needs.

Love, tears and autism, an Australian mother's journey from heartbreak to hope is published by Firewheel Books, 2018

Every now and then I enjoy revisiting children's books which my family has enjoyed. In looking for a book to share with my 8-year-old grand-



daughter I rediscovered *Ramona* by Beverly Cleary. Ramona is a bright and bubbly, not-quite-8-year-old, who loves her family and enjoys nothing better than clanking down the street on a pair of home-made tin-can stilts with her friend, Howie. One way and another, Ramona often finds herself in a



pickle (like when she fashioned a crown from grass burrs, necessitating the painstaking snipping of each strand of her tangled hair to remove them). This series of books, and the many others written for children by Beverly Cleary, speak of a simpler time in the world's history and are perfect for story time with any children aged between 6 and 10.

The adventures of Ramona, her sister Beezus and all the gang who live on Klickitat Street are published by Harper

Happy reading!

Christine

Prayer

Our hope and confidence is in you,
our loving Father;
you have opened the door of heaven
through your plan of salvation.

Our hope and confidence is in you,
our saviour, Jesus Christ;
you have paved the way for us to know
joyous relationship with God.

Our hope and confidence is in you,
our counsellor, Holy Spirit;
you have shined a light for us to see
the love of the Father and Son.

**Thanks be to God,
for our sure and steadfast confidence
and the hope in which we glory. Amen**

Taken from www.mothersunion.org/resources.

Used by permission

News from the Top End

'What a beautiful painting, Anita!' I was looking at a canvas that she brought out from her house to show me. Anita is a Lajamanu woman who lives at Anglicare Transitional Housing in Darwin. She is here because her husband must receive dialysis three times a week; he is wheelchair-bound and has lost a leg.

Anita had painted a canvas of the day of Pentecost with the symbol of the Trinity at the top. I suggested that she bring it to St James' to show us a few weeks later. People affirmed her talent and one congregational member had some spare canvases and paints at home, which she decided to donate to Anita. These materials are expensive and someone on a welfare benefit doesn't have the money to purchase this equipment.



Anita is one of a small number of women who took part in a sewing class that I ran in late 2020 at Anglicare Transitional Housing. We could only manage to teach 2 women each time over a period of 6 weeks. Machine sewing is intensive, and because we had small children to supervise as well, we kept the numbers low. The women were asking to sew skirts with the brightly coloured tropical



patterns that they love. There were also requests for cushion covers, curtains and cloth bags. They wanted the curtains for their next move when they leave Anglicare and get placed in Territory Public Housing. Fortunately, I had some donated bolts of cloth from a friend to help these women.

I also decided to run a cooking group with permission from Anglicare at the same location.

There is a community room on-site with a well-equipped kitchen. The aim was to teach cheap, nutritious recipes that could be easy to prepare. We even had men attending some sessions. The women often didn't know about measurements like a teaspoon, tablespoon, or metric quantities. Some



couldn't read a recipe. Everyone there, including some relatives loitering about outside, enjoyed eating the food that we produced. The women made home-made pizzas, shepherd's pie, zucchini slice, fruit salad and biscuits over the time.

These activities evolved out of the visiting my husband and I have been doing at Anglicare Transitional Housing over a period of 3 years. As we met people, gained their trust, and prayed with those who asked for it, we realised some women felt bored and anxious about how long they would have to wait for permanent housing. Some are here to look after sick relatives, others have permanent health conditions that require regular contact with the hospital, others are fleeing family violence.

The Anglicare staff were happy for me and other volunteers to provide some recreational activity as a way of improving people's mental health and well-being. It was also a good opportunity for neighbours to meet who came from different language groups and nations. Through these activities I have been able to have very significant conversations with some of these women about their pressures, loneliness, homesickness for country and some of their anxieties about their families.

When Covid hit, we were unable to continue these activities for a year, but just lately, the women have asked me-



'When can we do the sewing and cooking again?' I am telling them, 'Soon, in July'.

Rosemary Snibson
CMS worker in Darwin

AMUA, through its Northern Outreach Fund, has allocated money to assist Rosemary in this ministry to women living in Transitional Housing in Darwin.

The Ballarat Shower Bus project

The City of Ballarat can be cold and harsh for homeless people during the winter months. The Shower Bus Project was prompted by two things. Firstly, St Paul's Church in Bakery Hill in Ballarat is very near the centre of the city, just 2 or 3 blocks from a major shopping precinct. Homeless people often sought shelter in and around the church. There was an old lean-to carport at the rectory and this was a popular shelter during inclement and cold weather. The second thing that prompted the project was that our priest at the time, Fr Constantine Osuchukwu had enrolled to do a mentored leadership course run in Ballarat.

Finding somewhere to sleep and getting enough to eat were issues that were solved after a fashion for homeless people. The Anglicans provided breakfast, the Uniting church provided lunch and the community-sponsored soup bus provided an evening meal. The homeless didn't always sleep in doorways as some, including women and children, slept in their cars. Public toilets provided some facilities, but where do these people shower? It was out of this question that the One Humanity Shower Bus Project was born.

The One Humanity committee involved a number of community members – the exact composition changed over the course of the development phase. Service clubs, Anglicare and the Local Government body were involved in areas of the development.

A local bus company offered the group an old bus, which was very gratefully received. The local media were very supportive, running informative articles about the project. Local companies, tradespeople and organisations put a lot of time, money and materials into the remodelling of the bus, which occurred in a vacant warehouse space that was also donated. A couple of major community fundraising events helped with costs.

Eventually the finished bus had 2 showers, both with their own hot water supply, space for other activities and storage. Local hairdressers offered their services free on the nights the shower bus operated and other local tradespeople and professionals assisted. Some of the local schools provided individual shower packs for the clients. The shower bus required power, water and a drainage outlet to take away the water and this was arranged at a local sports venue where the homeless often gathered. The bus operated on a couple of days a week, during the late afternoon and evening, with support from the local law enforcement. The bus was a well-used facility and opened up the communication lines with those sleeping rough. The shower bus was created with a specific goal in mind and for a specific reason. Its direction always was, and still is, guided by the original objective: **To provide hope and dignity through provision of hygiene services to the homeless of Ballarat.**

The Shower Bus it still operating and is a 100% community-run operation. You can follow it on <https://www.facebook.com/OneHumanityShowerBus/>



Sixty years in Mothers Union

DIOCESE OF TASMANIA

When I first joined MU in the parish of Northcote (Melbourne) in 1962 we had quite a large group of young Mums with babies, several slightly older Mums with school aged children and four or five who had started as young Mums and were now Grannies or Great grannies.

For the last 57 years I have lived in the beautiful island of Tasmania. Our present MU group, (St George's, Battery Point), though much smaller in number, and older in age (our ages range from mid-60s to 95), continues to meet monthly to find out what's happening everywhere, have a prayer service, share lunch together and enjoy good fellowship.

These times are invaluable, because we know the Lord is with us, and most of us live alone. There are only two other groups in Southern Tasmania—New Norfolk and Bellerive—and also some lone members. Three times annually we all get together. On Lady Day in March all the MU groups get together for a service in our little church of St. Barnabas and spend the rest of the day together. In August we all meet at New Norfolk for Mary Sumner Day and then, in December, at All Saints in Hobart for an Advent Service to finish the year, have a meal together and plan what we will do in the next 12 months.

We continue to be inspired by the amazing things MU is achieving in other parts of the world, and we follow the prayer diary. (I try to remember to pray Mary Sumner's personal prayer every day. It is so special.



All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee,

And every life I touch, do thou, by thy Spirit quicken,

Whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe

Or the life I live. Amen.

May the beauty of Jesus be seen in us, and those with whom we meet be drawn to seek Him too.

Jane Beavan

DIOCESE OF THE MURRAY

In July I drove to the Lower South East of S.A. to meet with members there. In Naracoorte after lunch and a service we 'played' The Big Idea taken from the AMUA website to stimulate our thoughts to think outside the square. I was amazed at the great ideas that resulted. I also used the meditation using our hands that Sheran, our Worldwide President, used in a recent Zoom meeting. I enrolled one new member and had two members due for a 50-and 60-year badge. Long membership of AMUA seems to me to mean that we certainly have our Aims and Objects right for a person to continue in something for so long. I particularly wanted to say 'thank you' to Jan Malpas, our 60-year recipient. Jan told us a little of her journey from being asked as a young mum to start a Mothers Union group in a country town to being our Australian President for 6 years. She currently leads the Naracoorte branch with just as much love and care as she has always put into her roles. Her branch prayer partner had made a surprise cake to celebrate the occasion.

The next day I went to morning tea with members and parishioners in Mount Gambier and it was great to meet up in person. This branch is an example of Transformation—Now! Five members continue as Diocesan members and others enjoy the friendship, care and sharing that a monthly morning tea offers.

Jocelyn Williamson

Around the Dioceses

AMUA TRAVELLING PLAQUE

It's great to hear that the plaque has been from Newcastle Cathedral to New Lambton to Cardiff, The Lakes and Gorokan branches. It is quite heavy, so is being passed on physically rather than being posted. It is going to take a while to get around the diocese. Perhaps if you are passing through Newcastle diocese you might like to collect it and bring it home to your own diocese. Let's keep it moving!

Anne Kennedy

ADELAIDE

In May Adelaide MU hosted a very successful film fundraiser. About 150 members and friends enjoyed 'Downton Abbey — A New Era' at The Regal Theatre. A trading table boosted the coffers along with the raffle of 5 baskets of donated goods. After expenses, the profit will be more than \$2,500 for our chosen projects. Morning tea allowed precious time to meet and greet one another.

We look forward to the next film, 'Mrs Harris goes to Paris', in September.

Cynthia Kennedy

ELIZABETH DOWNS

As our monthly meeting fell on July 5, which was during NAIDOC week, I thought I would do something different. Although it was a cold morning, we all braved the weather and took our



St Catherines MU members: Betty, Maureen, Barbara, Enid, Elizabeth, Linda.

chairs outside and had our opening meeting in the sunshine.

I managed to find an article for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Prayer Service, 'Holy Spirit in This Land'. It was very moving and soul searching.

Linda Roberts

A Special Birthday for Joan

Joan Richardson celebrated her 100th birthday at **St Martin's Glenelg** with a scrumptious afternoon tea provided by members of the congregation. Joan has been a tireless MU member for her branch and area, having held a number of positions, including overseas correspondent and treasurer. For 30 years she carried the St Peter's, Glenelg, banner at the Lady Day celebrations in St Peter's Cathedral in Adelaide and was still baking the annual simnel cake for Mothering Sunday at the grand age of 93. Joan is the heart and soul, not only of the MU group, but of the St Martin's congregation, and is the one to recall past events, people and clergy. On behalf of our Diocesan President, Marion, and all MU members, Beth Ingram presented her with beautiful flowers.

Betty Edwards



BRISBANE

The parish of **St Peter the Fisherman, Clontarf**, has started collecting recyclables and AMUA members are pleased to join in this project which encourages everyone to take part in transforming the environment. Many parishioners have been doing some of this at home, but now, with a place set up at church for their convenience, we are able to help others who found it difficult to take their recyclables to community places.

Gill Bust



Usually, a farewell is a sad event. However, when the Hervey Bay Branch farewelled member Margaret Arkell with lunch at the Hervey Bay Boat Club, it was smiles all round. Why? Well, it's because Margaret is always smiling. Margaret has been a valued member for her roles as Vice-President and in keeping some of our members close through our Intercessory Prayer Circle. Margaret was presented with a crocheted rug as a reminder of her time in Hervey Bay and to help keep her warm as she moves south to the colder climes.

Hervey Bay members wish her well as she moves to live near family. All are sure that Margaret will be back in the future as she still has family living in Hervey Bay and we look forward to catching up with her in the future.

Rosemary Gilby

North Pine Branch has been instrumental in the installation of a Red Bench as part of the Red Rose Foundation. Instigated by President Joan Bird, and with the very generous assistance of Councillor Yvonne Barlow of Moreton Bay Council, a red bench has been erected in Acacia Park, located in Pine River Drive, Murrumba Downs, by the water in a place of peace and beauty. Its purpose is to raise awareness of domestic violence and provide the opportunity for this important issue to be always visible. Plaques have been attached drawing attention to domestic violence and the Red Bench Project, the Moreton Shire Council and Mothers' Union. A brief dedication



ceremony was held, attended by Councillor Barlow and several MU members, and at which we prayed that all those who come to sit there might not just enjoy the pleasure of its position but be aware of the reason for its presence.

Judy Tainton

GRAFTON

Tweed Heads Branch

Like so many MU Branches, gathering as a group has become quite a rarity during the COVID years. Recently, however, Tweed Heads 'broke out', initially for the peace and tranquillity of a 'Quiet Day' held at Rev. Sue Woodcock's home above Coolangatta.

Our Rector, Reverend Dway Goon Chew, led us into the Magnificat; Song of Zechariah and Nunc Dimittis, and it certainly made all our members dig deep into the recesses of hearts and minds as beliefs and faith were explored. It was absolutely wonderful!

The peace of the day concluded with Holy Communion in the rain forest garden, and lunch.

On 20th July, following the success of the quiet day, we launched into a 'Soup and Slice' fund-raising day to support our target fund project, 'Disaster and Climate Change Management in the Pacific'. This project is particularly topical given the recent underground volcano which spilled



ash over Tonga. The reports suggest that clean-up is well under way, but there is still a lot to be achieved for life to return to normal. Recovery includes such activities as re-establishing

food gardens as well as ensuring child protection and re-establishing water supplies.

Bronwyn Lakay, a chiropractor, massage healing & well-being professional spoke to the group, focusing on our breathing habits. \$600 was raised and if the noise level of the group chatting, laughing and slurping soup was any indication, the day was a wonderful success.

Hooray—MU in Tweed Heads is back on track once more!!!

Yvonne Turner

NEWCASTLE DIOCESE MEMBERS TRANSFORM THEIR COMMUNITY

Belmont Branch

In seeking to help transform our community we donate toiletry kits to the hospital Emergency Department for patients (both female and male) admitted in an emergency. Members knit baby booties and these, along with a St. Luke's gospel and Mothers Union card, are given to patients at the Birthing Unit at the hospital. Our members volunteer in the local Op shop. We also are present at baptisms in our church and present the family with a book & knitted bear – a gift from M U. Our group helps in January for the Coffee & Care at a nearby Children's Court.

Recently our Craft Group has given 10 crocheted rugs to Novacare (a disability support group) and 4 crocheted knee rugs to Opal Care, to help keep others warm on these colder winter days. The craft group consists of Belmont parishioners, mostly MU people, plus people from the community who enjoy a friendly chat.

Nancy Lott



Boolaroo Branch, Lake Macquarie, supply toiletry bags, made up of family, female and male packs, for people who have to live out of their cars, which the Samaritan Foundation of the Diocese of Newcastle delivers to the recipients.

We have been involved with the Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit for many years, supplying financial aid and items for the Department. For example, sometimes a call comes in for Humidicrib covers and other special items that are not supplied by the government. Baby Bundles have also been on our list for many years. These include everything a mum needs for the first few days and weeks for the baby and are given out by the Family Care nurses to new mums who do not have much help or finance.

Laurel Brook

WANGARATTA

One way to forget the winter blues and Covid pandemic is to join folk who like to socialise and sing along to popular songs. Such was the case

when over 70 folk joined together to enjoy 'Morning Melodies' in Seymour, when the parish of Central Goulburn hosted their Mothers' Union Overseas and Northern Outreach fundraiser on 23 June.

Guests also came along to support the popular local entertainer, Noel Pearson, and to enjoy the evergreen songs he performed. After having to cancel last year's fundraiser twice, we were very glad to be able to conduct it this year, and were delighted that at the end of the morning no-one wanted to go home.



The Central Goulburn MU branch's oldest member, Muriel Andrea, celebrated her 96th birthday recently and Noel Pearson made her feel very special by singing Happy Birthday to her at the Morning Melodies. Muriel has been a member of the MU since 1959.

The delicious morning tea was prepared and served by the MU members and helpers and was enjoyed by all. The annual fundraiser was a success thanks to the support of all concerned.

Diane Grant

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.**

'But you will receive *power*
when the *Holy Spirit* comes
on you; and you will be my
witnesses in *Jerusalem*,
and in all *Judea* and
Samaria, and to the
ends of the *earth*.'

ACTS 1:8

