

MIA *mia*

ANGLICAN
MOTHERS UNION
AUSTRALIA

SUMMER 2022



*Tell out my soul
the greatness of
the Lord!*



President:

Reverend Anne Kennedy
Email: ppmuaustralia@telstra.com

Secretary:

Mrs Lyn Middleton
Email: muaustsecretary@telstra.com

Treasurer:

Mrs. Marilyn Robey
Email: muausttreasurer@telstra.com

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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Christine Brain
Email: miamia@muaustralia.org.au

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Have your say in Mia Mia

Suggestions, comments, contributions
and insights are welcome.

Please send all correspondence
to the editor.

Publication in *Mia Mia*
is at the editor's discretion.

Theme for next issue:
Sacrifice

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Meet our contributors

Ruth France is no stranger to *Mia Mia* readers. She is married to Ben and they are parents to three active boys. Ruth lives in Walcha, NSW, where Ben is the Vicar of the Anglican church. She loves most sports, long distance running, touch footy, holidays at the beach and sharing the great news of Jesus with her friends and relatives. In this issue Ruth shares some of the exciting ways in which her family experienced God's blessings during their recent long-service leave.

Steph Hunt grew up in a Christian home and an Anglican church in the sleepy suburbs of North West Sydney. At 19 she followed her heart to the ends of the earth (campervanning around Europe) where God took her to the end of herself and drew her to Himself at the age of 20. She's been married to Neil for 30 years and together they grew their kids up in Armidale. They've just started together on the adventure of parish ministry, having studied together at Queensland Theological College in their 40s. They currently live in Wee Waa, where Neil is the Anglican minister. They are officially empty-nesters this year, with four adult kids, two sons-in-law and two delightful grandsons. Steph is a registered nurse who works at the local referral hospital, leads women's Bible study, (thankfully they also lead her), joined MU in Armidale a couple of years ago and enjoys knitting, coffee and cake, a good movie and days off with Neil. They love living in and driving around the 'Big Sky Country' of the Kamilaroi people. In this issue of *Mia Mia* Steph invites us to reflect Biblically on the messages we give ourselves through our 'self-talk.'



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Prayers for Advent and Christmas

This Advent, as we wait for
the Hope of the World
we pray for God's hope to overcome
the despair of loss and loneliness.

God of light and hope,
Hear our prayer

This Advent, as we wait for
the Light of the World
we pray that the love of God would bring light
in the lives of our family and friends.

God of light and hope,
Hear our prayer

This Advent, as we wait for
the Hope of the World
we pray that the love of God would fill
us all with sure and certain hope.

God of light and hope,
Hear our prayer, Amen

This Christmas, as we remember
that there was no room at the inn,
we pray for all who are homeless,
and those who work to shelter them.
Wherever the world is in darkness Lord,

Let there be light

This Christmas, as we remember the birth of Jesus in a stable,
we pray for all who are living in poverty,
and those who work to provide for them.
Wherever the world is in darkness Lord,

Let there be light

This Christmas, as we remember the violence
of the search for the Christ child,
we pray for all who are in danger,
and those who work to protect them.
Wherever the world is in darkness Lord,

Let there be light

This Christmas, as we remember those who
journeyed to the stable,
we pray for all who are seeking you,
and those who are leading the way.
Wherever the world is in darkness Lord,

Let there be light, Amen

Taken from <https://www.mothersunion.org/resources> Used by permission
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From the Editor's desk

As 2022 draws to a close we do well to take time to reflect on the year that has passed. And what a year it's been! As a community we have continued to experience the effects of the Covid pandemic, which, although diminished, is a still-present reality, always lurking in the back of our mind and changing some of our behaviour forever. Wars and rumours of war have played out on our television screens; floods and other disasters have impacted many in Australia and beyond. We have seen a change of government in Canberra and we have mourned the death of Queen Elizabeth II. As individuals we have also experienced in our own lives the ups and downs of living in a beautiful, but fallen, world. So the question we might ask ourselves is, 'What have I learned about myself and about God in 2022? In what ways have I experienced God's goodness? How am I 'telling out the greatness of the Lord'? How has God transformed me, my MU group, the community in which I live?'

In this issue we hear from our regular contributors as well as several others who have a story to tell of the ways in which God has blessed them. Since this issue coincides with Advent and Christmas there are some prayers and an Advent calendar with a difference (both from the Mothers Union UK website) which might help focus your thinking on the wonder of God becoming flesh and 'pitching his tent' with us. There are also some 'DIY' prayers – two psalms which invite us to enter into whole-hearted praise of our gracious God. Perhaps you might even compose a tune and sing them out loud (even if only under the shower!)

This is an issue with much to encourage and challenge us. I trust that you will find time to 'read, mark and inwardly digest' each article slowly and deliberately. As you do, why not pray that God might open your eyes to new possibilities for service, new strength for the journey and new reasons to rejoice in the God who is good – all the time.

Christine



A word from our President

Mothers Union Worldwide – telling the greatness of the Lord!

From the tiniest, most delicate orchid to the massive whales that swim in our oceans; from the smallest insect to the vast Milky Way – how can you not believe in a great Creator? There is so much that is unexplained, even in this age of science and technology. The world, the solar system, the universe is so huge that human minds can hardly claim to know a small portion of the wonder that surrounds us.

The ability of an awkward baby giraffe to stand soon after its birth, the dependence of a human child on parents for years, the innate knowledge that is stored in hearts and minds that protects the weak and helpless, and provides love and comfort when hope is lost. The ability of individual people working together to create and to continue to weave a web of loving, caring, prayerful fellowship around the world is a small part of the greatness of the Lord, and yet the effect of this network, called Mothers Union, is inestimable.

Each member, through prayer, study and action, brings the love of Jesus into our hurting world, to soothe, comfort, encourage and support families and those who have not felt the loving arms of our Saviour around them. By creative and innovative ways, differences are being made every day to people all over the world by MU members, just like you!

What better way to act out the gospel than in the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:35-40 – *'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger*

and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me ... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

The MU Global Framework, initiated at the Global Gathering in 2017 in Ireland, and developed through **MULOA – Mothers Union – Listening, Observing, Acting** – asks us to recognize and use the skills, resources and talents around us. Through this process people are able to take ownership of their own future, lifting them from dependency.

Your gift of prayer, as a member of MU, is vital because it's through our prayer and action that we carry out the will of God by working to create a peaceful and safe environment for all, by fighting for gender justice, and by building individuals' self-reliance.

As we think of the gifts we will receive and give at this time of year, remember to thank God for the greatest gift of all – Jesus Christ, sent to us as a tiny babe, to live on Earth and to show us the way back to God. May you and your family be blessed with God's love this Christmas and in the year to come.

Anne Kennedy



Prayer

FOR THE CHURCH

Almighty God, pour down your Spirit upon your whole Church. Grant us a new vision of your glory, a new experience of your power, a new faithfulness to your word, a new consecration to your service, that through our renewed witness your holy name may be glorified and your kingdom advanced through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(A Worship and Prayer Book for MU Australia, page 91)





Speak up!



‘The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”’ Matthew 25:40

Let me paint you a little picture that may cause you some concern. A little boy, unclothed from the waist down, sits on his potty. He seems quite pleased with his efforts, singing a little song and looking about for praise from anyone close by. The picture so far causes no concern. The joy of potty-training is familiar to all mothers and an important part of child-rearing. Lots of children enjoy singing when they are on the potty. Some even clap their hands.

The picture only becomes concerning when you look at the setting. It is a chilly winter morning and the child is on the bitumen carpark in a roadside rest area. His little sister can be heard crying in the nearby tent. His mother is crying and begging the council worker to be allowed to stay in the rest area a few more days. She has no car and is waiting for a friend to come back to help her move to another spot.

The council worker has no authority to grant her request. Rules are rules and regulations are regulations. This is a rest area for passing motorists. The maximum stay is 20 hours. He cannot allow her to continue camping there, no matter what her circumstances are. ‘But,’ he continues, ‘I can tell you that I’m very busy at the moment and will not be able to come back to check this area for another three days. That’s the best I can do.’

I know you’ll think I am going on like a cracked record, but I’ll say it again. The housing crisis is real. Homeless families are living on the roadside. Homelessness is not confined to either the city or remote country regions. It is a concern in every one of the 151 federal electorates in Australia. There is no quick fix, but the time for action is now. Well...yesterday really, but we can’t rectify the action or inaction of the past, no matter how much we wish we could. The situation cannot and must not be accepted as unfixable. The need for affordable safe and secure housing is urgent. ICESCR¹, article 11 states: Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes the right to adequate housing. The right to housing is more than simply a right to shelter. It is a right to have somewhere to live that is adequate.

It can be so easy to forget about the poor in our communities. Whether it is through our giving, our prayers, or our time, we are to care for the poor and advocate for better conditions. I ask members to contact local representatives of all levels of government to stress the need to work together to find a solution. Publicity stunts or buck-passing won’t get the job done.

Susan Skowronski

1 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which is an international human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, signed by Australia and many other countries.

News from the Australian Council on Children and Media

CMA has launched a new parent resource *Helping 0 to 3 year olds thrive in a digital world* in support of the SA Government funded program *Words Grow Minds* launched on 24 October and developed by the *0-3 Taskforce*, led by Raising Literacy Australia. CMA’s members played an active role in this taskforce.

The campaign talks to parents, carers and early years service providers with a memorable message and call to action. It aims to communicate broadly the importance of early childhood development in the first three years, and what we can do to help our youngest children thrive. (CMA ebulletin 25 October 2022, accessed 25/10/22)



What's in a Name?



A lot really – we all feel ‘something’ if we are the subject of naming and shaming. And similarly, with praise, adoration and just ‘you’re a good egg’. In the end, the act of being named affects us: but it also affects the person who does the naming.

I have an Advent Calendar, a set of cards that stand ready for my contemplation, spiral bound so I can change them each day. These *Cries of Advent* make up *A Calendar of Meditations*. For the first 24 days of December a Name for our Lord Jesus, such as *Living Word, Key of David, Cornerstone*, encourages and challenges prayer and reflection. Some are biblical, some traditional, others by spiritual writers. I have been using them out of season, while writing Thought for the Week, and there before me on my desk was:

O Sovereign...

What a topical title this is, as the English nation, countries of the British Commonwealth and the Anglican Church throughout the world deal with the shock of the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the ascending to the throne of King Charles III. The name itself seems to fall uneasily from our mouths; King Charles belonged to the time of the Puritan Roundheads and the Royalist Cavaliers. The Church of England was stopped in its tracks, only to be reinstated with the ascent of King Charles II and more lacy cuffs and long curly wigs.

Now King Charles is a real live person, in our time. He is now our temporal Sovereign, Head of our Church, and as his mother before, will be concerned for all those people and nations who are within, and connected to, the Commonwealth.

So, contemplate with me now the Advent cry:

*O Sovereign of all the peoples,
uniting Jew and Gentile, white and black,
come and reconcile us
whom you are shaping out of common clay.*

Contemplate Jesus’s rule of acceptance. Consider how he associated with the abhorred and even those who broke the law. Consider those you regard as sinners. Consider those who Jesus challenged and why they did not respond. Ask your Sovereign Lord to unbind your heart, clear your mind, release you from your prejudice.

For all the messages that tell us we are the most important person we know, our Sovereign Lord even now, in the present moment, is helping you remember that you are but dust.

May we, ‘common clay’, one day enter the Kingdom.

Lesley McLean

This is my last contribution to Mia Mia as National Prayer and Spirituality Convenor. I have loved writing for you all, so if you wish to continue the conversation, please feel free to contact me.

AMUA is a member of the Australian Council on Children and the Media. You can read their newsletters, access research and read reviews of movies, games and apps by going to the website, <https://childrenandmedia.org.au/> This is a great resource for all parents, grand-parents and carers concerned about what children are watching. With the summer holidays approaching, the movie reviews, ‘Know before you go’, can be particularly helpful in deciding whether a movie is suitable for that treat you might be planning for the children in your lives. (Ed.)



**CHILDREN
& MEDIA
AUSTRALIA**

**ACCM has rebranded as Children
and Media Australia (CMA)**

**CMA supports children and families to thrive
in the expanding world of screen media.**



Tell out my soul

I don't think I would ever have been good enough to sing in a real choir – though I would have loved the chance. But there is always the opportunity to join the choir of God's people as we sing together in church. No one judges you for your vocal abilities and you have all the fun of song!

One recent Sunday morning, we all enthusiastically joined together to sing,

*Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord,
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word –
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.*

I loved it. I couldn't believe it, as I had been mulling over what to write on the theme 'Tell out my soul' at the time. But it was not merely the fact of singing with my Christian brothers and sisters, or that the tune is a good one. It was that the song itself gave me something precious, namely joy. How and why did it do that?

Joy is not something we can manufacture. We can't get out of bed and say, 'I am going to be joyful today'. It does not work like that. Instead, we are filled with joy when we see or hear something which creates joy in our souls. I think of that moment back in 2000 at the Sydney Olympic Games, when our Cathy Freeman won gold in the 400 metres. There must have been 80,000 people in the stadium, and they all rose as one to shout her praises. So did we, watching at home. There were smiles all around ... and joy.

And, of course, the words of the song give us the message: 'Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord, unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice'. We are not watching Cathy Freeman. We are seeing something much, much more wonderful – the greatness of the Lord.

We see his greatness in the wonders of creation. I have just had a lengthy trip by car through large sections of the Australian bush. Merely gazing at the trees in all their splendour is enough to make me thank God and rejoice in him. It is going to be absolutely wonderful when the jacarandas blossom in a little while! Although they dropped their flowers in the wind and rain and got very squishy, I loved the avenue of jacarandas where we used to live.

However, many people look at the same sights and don't think of God. Christians have been taught to do so by his word. It is as if we are wearing special glasses which enable us to see the truth behind what we gaze at, and so we lift our hearts to the Maker of all things.

But there is even more to it than this. You may know that the hymn is based on the song which Mary sang when she visited Elizabeth, after she learned that she was to give birth to the Son of God. It is the famous Magnificat, recorded for us in Luke 1:46-55.

Mary's joy was not provoked by the glories of the creation. She was rejoicing because 'he has looked on the humble estate of his servant ... and his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation'.

Our greatest joy comes as we think that God has drawn near to us in Jesus even though we are weak and lowly and do not deserve his love. I can't help smiling when I see the word 'mercy' because, as Mary obeyed the Lord and as Jesus was born into the world and died for us, so the Lord expressed his love and his mercy.

Christmas is near. For all the effort of getting ready for the day, the present-buying, the food preparation and the noise and bustle of the shopping centres, the heart of Christmas will always be the same: Jesus's coming to save us.

Just as Mary was a poor and insignificant person, taken up and used by the Lord, so we too are able to be used by him to talk and sing about Jesus. Oh, what joy!

And that's another thing. We are told to rejoice. How do we do that? By fixing our eyes on the mighty works of God and entrusting ourselves to God. I'm so relieved that being joyful is not dependent on circumstances or feeling happy.

So, you can get out of bed every day and have joy. You can think about the love and mercy of God and...Rejoice!

Christine Jensen



Moving ahead in the grace of God

**'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered.
'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Luke 1:46**

The theme for this issue of *Mia Mia* is based on the opening line of a wonderful hymn, *Tell Out My Soul the Greatness of The Lord*, one I personally enjoy singing with gusto. It celebrates the announcement of the supernatural conception of a baby who would come into the world to save us all, and who, being born in a stable, had such a humble beginning.

This hymn was written in 1961 by Timothy Dudley-Smith, who was born in Manchester on December 26, 1926.* Timothy was ordained for ministry in the Church of England in 1950, and served in various roles, including that of Bishop of Thetford. During his ministry he also became a well-known hymn writer. This hymn was first published in the *Anglican Hymn Book* in 1965.

With Christmas fast approaching, along with all the preparations that go with it, this theme turns our attention to Mary, a young woman who had found favour with God. Visited by an angel, she was told she had been chosen to be the mother of a Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The story of Mary and the first Christmas reminds me of my time as a Sunday School teacher, when the annual prize-giving church service included a concert. My class would act out the Nativity with most of the girls wanting to play the role of Mary. Have we ever thought of putting ourselves in her position? Maybe at times unknowingly we have. Not in the exact way, but by being put into an unexpected and unknown situation, where we feel unsure and even challenged by what lies ahead, whether it be in our daily lives or in our Christian journey. Though undoubtedly quite shocked at the announcement, Mary accepted her

task in spite of the challenges and circumstances of the journey ahead, and said *'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour'* (Luke 1:46). Everything Mary did and was came through the grace of God.

While Christmas is traditionally a time for children, it is also a time for us as adults, who know and understand the world as it is, and not through the eyes of what a child may think or believe it to be. Our founder, Mary Sumner, was a lady of deep and great faith, who spent many hours in prayer saying, *'Prayer brings Christ's influence; from prayer we shall derive confidence.'* Her focus was on *'the glorious task of winning the nation's homes for Christ. If only we would expect great results and answers to our prayers, we should win hundreds of hearts and homes that now seem impossible, for the days of miracles are not over'*. These words are still relevant today, as we try to bring the love of God into the lives and hearts of others, through his Son, Jesus.

As we come to the end of a triennium, which includes a changeover in many positions across our branches and Executive, we have these two Marys, who put their love and trust in God, as examples. May we, individually and as members of Mothers Union, move into 2023 with a new vision to continue to transform ourselves to meet our changing times.

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph,

the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ-child.

May Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. Amen.

(From All-day Prayers)

*This date also coincides with the Feast of St. Stephen, sharing the name of my previous parish church. While numbers were very small, especially being the day after Christmas, the Priest would always conduct a special service, including the singing of *'Good King Wenceslas'*.

Denise Lay





Mary sings of the greatness of the Lord

The hymn that begins 'Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord' is a paraphrase of the Magnificat or the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), a song of praise and recognition of a loving God. When I begin singing this hymn, I cannot help but feel uplifted and almost compelled to sing with praise and gusto. Mary's words have much to teach us about praising God in all aspects of our lives, giving thanks for God's care and in turn, realizing our responsibility to tell others.

Mary received God's call to be the mother of Jesus the Christ amidst the ordinariness of her daily life. Luke does not record anything about her lineage, thus emphasising her insignificant social status. Yet the Greek words for 'overpowered' and 'overshadowed' evoke protection, guidance and empowerment¹, already signaling a change in the prevailing social attitudes to women.

Despite discovering that she would become a teenage mother (a situation that would cause stresses in our families), Mary trusts in God's promise. She freely agrees to undertake the mission entrusted to her by God despite being unmarried and attracting stigma, rejection and possible stoning (Deut 22:20). 'Let it be according to your word' (Luke 1:38) denotes choice. Mary's choice brings new hope to the world. However, we live in a world where not all women have choice. Many women in low-resource and socially constrained situations have little or no choice about being pregnant. On the other hand, choice is available in countries where there is access to well-resourced

health services, laws that ensure equal treatment and enablers for girls to be educated. *Important points for our reflection, praise and prayer.*

Mary lived in a country colonized by the Romans in a context of oppression and suffering. Yet, God's words through the message of the angel brought dignity and fostered hope for change in lives of struggle for women of that time². When Mary arrived to begin her stay with Elizabeth, both women recognized the wonder that God has bestowed on them. God had '...looked with favour' (that is, He had noticed Mary and her situation), out of which Mary appreciated and proclaimed that God '...has done great things for me'. Mary gloried in what God had done for her personally, then she also proclaimed the wider benefits for the people of Israel – she shared her story. Several biblical scholars propose that in the tradition of Miriam and Hannah, Mary sings to praise a world-transforming and liberating God. *How often do we remember to praise God in the situations of life? Are we prepared to share our experiences of what God has done for us?*

Mary's song continues to praise God's goodness and care in transforming social and economic conditions. She recalls how God has been working, what God has already achieved, '...brought down the powerful..., lifted up lowly, filled the hungry..., come to the aid.' Carter³ suggests that filling the hungry with good things is about redistributing power; food is about power – food production, distribution and consumption reflect control in a context where food could be scarce. This insight helps us to appreciate the social enterprise and savings groups that form an essential part of MU projects in many countries. Such initiatives redistribute power and contribute to the reduction of gender-based violence. I recall visiting a social-enterprise project in South Africa where the women readily shared the story of their transition from dependence to empowerment, feeding themselves and their families. Their happiness was a real reflection of hard work, determination and God's care through the people who supported their work. Appreciating God's goodness and giving praise also



Photo supplied by the Anglican Diocese of Perth

requires us to work for justice and advocate for an equitable distribution of the world's resources.

Towards the end of Mary's song is the message that God has mercy on those that fear him (fear as in having reverence and respect). God's mercy is expressed in the present tense but also with the promise of an ongoing relationship across generations. As Christians and MU members it is our responsibility to 'tell out' the message of the good news of Jesus the Christ to the generations in our care. As you journey through the weeks of Advent and prepare for celebrating Jesus's coming into the world at Christmas, I pray you may be strengthened to 'tell out the goodness of the Lord' amidst the commercial mayhem of Christmas.

Robin Ray

1. Reid, B., & Matthews, S. (2021). *Wisdom Commentary*. Collegeville, Liturgical Press pps 16-57
2. Elvey, A. F. (2020). *Reading the Magnificat in Australia*. Sheffield, Phoenix Press.
3. Carter, W. (2006). *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.

Psalm 100 (NIV)

¹Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

²Worship the LORD with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

³Know that the LORD is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep
of his pasture.

⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

⁵For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.



Perth Celebrates



Perth was the first stop on the recent visit to Australia by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, and his wife, Caroline. MU members from across the city were joined by clergy spouses to welcome Mrs. Welby at Holy Trinity, Malaga, home of the Sudanese worshipping community in Perth. Our hosts welcomed everyone with vibrant music and heart-felt praise before Mrs. Welby spoke on some of the important things God has taught her over the past 10 years.



'...The thing that gives us most value, gives freedom and enables us to have the opportunity to reach our potential,' she said, 'is to know who we are in Christ; how God sees us. The problem, very often, is that we start elsewhere...'

When my husband became a clergyman, I set myself such high targets by looking at other people I admired. I tried to model myself on them and could never quite reach their standard. I felt a failure; I felt I wasn't quite right; I couldn't quite do it. Then

what happened? My husband was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury! I thought, "If I can't do it as a clergy spouse, what am I going to do as the wife the Archbishop of Canterbury?"

... In the very early days, I was on retreat and one of the things I learned was that God loved me as I was... The thing that really struck me, apart from the fact that He loved and he called and he chose me, for the particular time that I was settling into, [was that] He said, "Caroline, all you have to do is to be the person I have called you to be." That is incredibly freeing, because [He is really saying], it's OK to be me. I think I'm not very good at anything, but that doesn't matter to God. God says "It's OK. I made you. You are you; that's who I made." I don't have to try to be someone else, and I don't have to compare myself negatively with anybody.

... So, if we step out and we don't compare ourselves to others, and we seek to be the person God has called us to be, we are in the place where God is and we are doing the thing that God is doing. We are just getting into His slipstream, really, and that is more powerful than me trying to be what I think is really wonderful in somebody else, but which is their gift, not mine... God loves us as people who are in the midst of getting things right. He only wants us to be the people He calls us to be. That is an encouragement; it's a challenge, but He is there all the time as we work those things out.'

Mrs. Welby then presented a very surprised Lois McGrath with a Life Membership badge and



certificate in recognition of her many years of faithful, committed and energetic service to MU in Perth and Australia. A well-deserved accolade!

We are thrilled that we were recently able to re-hang the original Mothers' Union banner in St George's Cathedral. When it was originally hung in the cathedral in 1932 it was an event of some significance, with reports in the newspapers of the day.

That banner was used from 1932, including a few trips to Australia Council, until the late 1990's when it became too fragile to continue being used.

As we began to think about our 125th anniversary in 2023 it was decided to try again to have the banner hung in the cathedral. Approaches were made to the Dean and the Cathedral Chapter, a new framer was found to re-frame it, and many prayers were said. Finally, we were given the go-ahead and a suitable place was found where the banner could be hung.

Mary Sumner Day was chosen as the perfect opportunity to unveil our banner. A wonderful service was held at the cathedral and members were thrilled to see the result of all of our labours. Lois McGrath (Diocesan Secretary) was given the privilege of unveiling the banner.

We are excited that, not only has the banner returned to its original home, but that it is hanging in a perfect position to continue to be a witness to the work of Mothers' Union over the last 125 years.

When you next visit Perth make sure you stop in at the Cathedral to see the restored banner.

Kaye Healy



God is good... all the time

At the recent gathering in Perth to welcome Mrs. Caroline Welby, Eltoma Tori shared this testimony of God's goodness.

About a year ago I was cooking for my family when I suffered a terrible accident. I was admitted to hospital, where I remained for some days receiving treatment. My face was badly scarred, and I thought my life was ruined. I was stressed, depressed and worried. I imagined that my husband would not want to stay with me, but would look for someone prettier. Thoughts such as, 'You'll never be beautiful again,' 'Don't go around people,' 'Don't go to work' and even, 'You might as well end your life – you have lots of pain-killing pills, just take them all' went round and round in my head.



One day two voices were repeating in my head. One was calling me to put my trust in God and the other was repeating all these negative things. I felt overwhelmed and didn't know what to do. I began crying and fell to my knees, praying to God. Then everything became quiet. The thoughts and voices disappeared and I found myself with the courage to find myself again. I opened my Bible and turned to the book of Isaiah and read, 'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will support you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand' (41:10)

I was also greatly encouraged by other scripture verses, including 'Can anyone of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?' (Matthew 6:27) and 'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be

discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.'

Sisters in Christ, God is alive! If you put your all in having a relationship with him, he will never leave you.

1. Trust in God.
2. Pray and focus in deeper.
3. Read the words of God.

'Trust in the LORD with all you heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.' (Proverbs 3:5)



Vivienne Feltham (North Queensland) also shares her testimony of God's goodness following an accident.

I had an accident when I was working on the mobile library; I fell and badly fractured my leg. It meant six weeks in hospital, about six months in a wheel chair and 12 months with an open wound on my leg which required regular treatment. In hospital, I shared a room with an elderly woman who was riddled with crippling arthritis. I realised that my injuries were minor by comparison and that I would recover. I had wonderful family and friends visiting me daily and I knew that I was never alone. Jesus was always there journeying beside me, strengthening me, the Holy Spirit prompting me and reminding me how blessed I am. One verse that I claim is Philippians 4.13 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'. All that I have done in my life, I know that I haven't done in my own strength!

The greatness of our God is that he cares for each and every one of us.

Positive Self-Talk

Self-talk is the way we talk to ourselves. It's our Sinner voice. We all do it, consciously or sub-consciously, and it has a huge impact on our well-being. Our conscious thoughts, combined with ingrained beliefs and biases, describe our reality and how we're experiencing it.

You might be someone whose inner voice speaks negatively about you or your achievements (or lack of). You might be positive and affirming in your self-talk. I know someone who congratulates himself on getting ready for bed in under 20 minutes...

I guess it all depends on how low your bar is. (Well done, Neil Hunt, I still beat you by 17 minutes!) My self-talk fluctuates between self-condemnation – 'you idiot, why did you say that?' – to arrogance – 'impressive come-back; nailed it!' And I've realised I mostly use other people as my reference point, 'I'm more educated than they are', 'She's so much more stylish than me!'.

We really need to be aware of what that inner voice is telling us about ourselves and the reality around us. But how do we know what's true? Should I always believe my inner voice? What is the reference point for what's true? What does and what should influence that voice which can mean the difference between feeling calm and collected or frantic and out of control?

Self-talk is everywhere in the Bible. The theme of this issue of *Mia Mia* is 'Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord.' This great hymn is based on Mary's incredible song in Luke 1 – she's just been told she'll give birth to the Saviour King and she says 'my soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour!'

So many of the Psalms are songs of self-and community-talk – they are often uplifting and glorifying – like Mary's song – or they can be depressed, fearful and lamenting. I need reminding daily that the place to go to shape my self-talk is God's word. There's great comfort in

knowing that all these raw human emotions are described for the very purpose of drawing us deeply into dependence and awe of our great God. Let's look at Psalm 43:5, for example.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.

The psalmist is troubled, depressed, fearful and even accusing God of rejecting him (v.2). This is true lament – the honest, painful, weeping struggle with harsh reality and the wondering

where God is and what He's doing in all of it. The self-talk is inward-focused and despairing. But it doesn't end there. What does the psalmist tell himself next? To put his hope in God; he will praise his Saviour, his God. The psalms are such a rich expression of every human emotion. The reflections of the soul are written to be prayed and sung back to God in times of despair and times of joy. We're encouraged to worship in and through the mess, joy, tears and wonder.



Photo: Thomas Wolter from Pixabay

Mark Vroegop says, 'To cry is human but to lament is Christian...it's one of the most theologically-informed things we do. It's a prayer in pain that leads to trust.' We can see this in just this one verse of Psalm 43. The cry of the downcast, troubled, soul becomes the song of hope and trust because God our Saviour is trustworthy. Not because the circumstances change, but because God doesn't. I'm so very thankful for this reminder. I need my self-talk to be gospel-shaped. Yes, I may listen to what's being said, but I desperately need to frame my response through the lens of Jesus, my Saviour and my God. When I stand at



the foot of the cross my self-talk is put in the right perspective. He died for me; His blood covers my sins. 'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus!' (Romans 8:1) Praise God!

Steph Hunt

Give your *Mia Mias* a second life

M*ia Mia* can be an ongoing resource in planning MU meetings, or in your own personal devotions. Here are some suggestions which have come to the Editor's inbox recently. Perhaps you have some ideas to share with other readers?

Use the prayers in your meetings.

Mount Barker (Diocese of The Murray) members report, 'We were thrilled to use pages 18 and 19 of the Winter issue of *Mia Mia* for our opening prayers for our meeting in July. Rather than praying for a project, we prayed for our parish. We are seeking God's direction on where he wants us to go next, and these two pages made a wonderful, joyful foundation for our prayer.'

Liz Hempel



A young mother-of 5 suggests, 'I thought you might like to share this with *Mia Mia* readers as a great way to keep using the wonderfully chosen prayers you include. I cut out the prayers and paste them on coloured paper (folded double so the print on the back wouldn't show through) and laminated them.'



Use an article as a discussion-starter

St Augustine's, Merewether, (Diocese of Newcastle) recently chose to have a discussion on the theme, 'Transformation Now', inspired by the Autumn *Mia Mia*. Anne Clark writes, 'The result was a success, and we were surprised by how vocal our 80-year-old members were!'

Several members had been recently widowed, and others had experienced long periods of caring for chronically ill husbands. These members spoke of how their lives had been transformed and of the great adjustments they had had to make, but all remained very positive and fulfilled. Christ had been ever-present in their lives.

Some more-mobile members talked about their everyday activities, such as shopping and walking around their village or towns. How easy it is to stop at the supermarket checkout in order to talk to the elderly migrant, assist a vision-impaired person or help a harassed mother with children who are being difficult. A word of encouragement is so easy to speak, but can be so helpful to the person we encounter. To assist a vision-impaired person in traffic, or to help someone at the checkout with change is such a simple act, but can make such a difference, transforming a stranger's day.

On a personal note, I decided to transform myself, at the age of 83, by losing weight. With personal prayer and a lot of discipline I managed to reach my goal, and I can now walk faster and further again. For this I thank my God.

Covid has been a sad time in our churches and we must try to grow our congregations again. To do this we must transform them into lively places. We have started with a small mothers', children and grandmothers' group, which we hope will go a little way in extending Christ's love among their families.

'Transformation Now' sounds such a big deal, but all members decided that, with thought, love and by taking a little extra time, we can all make a difference if we focus on the simple acts of everyday kindness, and perhaps, by saying a prayer as we leave home, asking God to open us up to more mindful acts of compassion and that he will transform our minds and attitudes to everyday problems and to make little changes that matter to others.'

Strength and Support Through Mothers Union

Support in loneliness



I have a yearly diary entitled 'Joy for Today', a gift from an MU Prayer Partner many years ago. It is part of my morning reading each day. Recently it triggered something in my brain...God has not called us to *perfect* service but to the place of

faithful service! I know that I am a sinner and the transforming gift of God is that I am forgiven and I am loved by Him unconditionally, through Jesus, His Son. However, I have always had difficulty with wanting to be perfect, so this was a wonderful insight!

My beloved James John, husband of almost 50 years, died just over three years ago. Suddenly, my 'rock' with whom I shared my faith every day, left me on my own! I was not unhappy at the situation, as I had put him in God's hands, but I was stunned! I hadn't expected him to die! God's ways are not our ways, so I lived with the fact that God always knows best. When COVID arrived, I felt shattered when church-going was not allowed! I hadn't fully appreciated just what the Eucharist meant to me! I felt lonely for the first time in my life. The family did their best with phone calls, videoed church and so on, but slowly I became depressed, which amazed me, and I judged myself for those feelings!!!

As our MU had become depleted in number, I took a remaining member with me and we went to another MU nearby. They welcomed us both with open arms, and we felt enveloped in God's love through these women. I also travelled to another MU group a little further, where another of our members had transferred, and it was the same there. It has just been the saving of me! Both of these groups are very active, providing for the needs of the community, and generously supporting MU projects. I also still travel, when I can, to Council meetings which are held in different parts of the Diocese. I find these so helpful in keeping me in touch with what is happening in MU,

and in renewing friendships which have been so important for me over the years.

Along with my Bible, MU Prayerbook, MU Prayer Diary, and the readings from the lectionary and my church I am feeling so much better and am very blessed!

What's more, I know that God loves me AS I AM!!!

As we sang this morning:

To God be the glory, great things He has done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice! (Repeat)

O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the Glory great things He has done!

Rosemary Waters, Perth

The Murray Meets Tasmania

While reading the Spring 2022 issue of *Mia Mia* I was struck by the fact that an article from St Georges Battery Point, Tasmania, and my article for The Murray were next to each other. I had a planned holiday to Tasmania within a few weeks and my booked accommodation was just across the road from St Georges, so I read on with a bit more interest. I contacted the branch and was able to catch up with Heather and Pat over a drink, when we discussed all sorts of AMUA items. We shared what is happening in our own branches and at Diocesan level. It was great to catch up with two such friendly women, who drove through heavy traffic to meet me. We found that we have similar problems and also similar outreach for our branches. I think we learnt a few ideas from each other for using the 'Transformation – Now' theme and I hope the feeling of belonging to a small Diocese has grown and inspired the three of us to remember that we are part of something much larger, something world-wide.

Jocelyn Williamson



Why Bother?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

While waiting for my grandchildren to come out of school, I could not help overhearing the conversations of parents as school wound down for the year. These conversations centred on the planning for Christmas dinner, the shopping for Christmas presents and the scheduling of gatherings with people for the never-ending round of Christmas drinks and functions.

After all the preparations, suddenly it is all over. Christmas presents are unwrapped at the speed of light, leaving a swathe of torn paper across the lounge-room floor. A lunch that has taken weeks to plan and hours or days to prepare is suddenly a pile of dirty dishes.

Why bother?

As we think of Emmanuel, God with us, we need to be reminded that Jesus is, and always was, God's 'Plan A'. If you pause to read John 1 and Colossians 1:15 you will see that it is very clear that Jesus was in the Godhead during Creation. He has always been, and was never something that God needed to resort to when Adam and Eve were banished from His presence. Jesus was never an afterthought, nor was the banishment of Adam and Eve something that caught God off-guard.

When we look at the creation of the world, at all living things and at the wonderful set of conditions that sustain life, and then think of the time and intricate planning that God put into our creation, we could also ask the same question...

...why bother?

God, knowing the end from the beginning, knew that sinfulness would mar His creation and His plans for us. He knew that there would be a time in history when Jesus would leave the Godhead to live on Earth as a human. He knew that there would be a horrible period of time when Jesus would be separated from the Godhead as He paid the required penalty for our sin.

Why bother?



You would all have different, yet similar answers, to the question 'Why bother with Christmas preparations?' The similarity would possibly be, 'Because I love my family and those who receive my gifts.'

And God's answer to the question, 'Why bother sending Jesus?'

It was because He loved us all that He gave His only Son so that we might believe, and having believed, be able to spend eternity with Him. Our devotion starts with John 3:16.

I sometimes summarise the Bible in one sentence – 'John, I love you because I made you, I want to spend eternity with you and I want your life to reflect that.'

Let's all thank God that He did bother to meticulously plan creation, that He sustains this creation, and that out of love for each of us He initiated an amazing, gracious plan that will ensure that those who believe will be able to spend eternity with Him and with those whom we love who share that belief.

Thank you, dear Lord, that you did bother because of your love for us. Thank you that you took the time to plan the universe and all aspects of creation; that you planned for Jesus to come to earth to make the pathway back to you a possibility and that you have planned a life for me

John Cronshaw

The Magnificent Magnificat

A retired GP friend recently mentioned to me that there is an anxiety epidemic engulfing our nation. Is it possible that the words of a teenage girl, spoken two thousand years ago, might point us to the cure for this epidemic? Given her circumstances – living in an occupied nation, unmarried and newly pregnant – she had every reason to feel anxious. However, having received assurance from God that her pregnancy was the result of God the *Holy Spirit's gracious overshadowing* (Luke 1:35), she committed herself in those memorable words, 'I am the Lord's servant, may your word to me be fulfilled' (1:38).

Mary's thinking moved from being *greatly troubled* (1:29), to *acceptance* (1:38) and then to *rejoicing* (1:46) in what we call 'Mary's Song' (1:46-55). How did this movement come about? Can we profit from her example? There is much that could be said, but these thoughts may be an encouragement to you.

Mary clearly understood her nation's story since her song is full of Old Testament teaching. As she travelled the four days to visit her aunt, Elizabeth, also miraculously pregnant (but unlike herself, through normal sexual intercourse) it is reasonable to assume she had the words of Samuel's mother, Hannah, running through her mind (1 Samuel 2:1-11). Her joy did not come from nowhere. Clearly, she had been taught, and had imbibed, the remarkable purpose of God in showing *mercy to Abraham's descendants* (1:55). **Understanding God's mercy through the gospel goes a long way to handling troubled thoughts and times in our lives.**

Mary was fortunate to have the godly wisdom and example of her older relative. Elizabeth had been shown mercy in being able to have a child when she was *well along in years* (1:18). She, too, had had time to ponder what was going on and we can only imagine the comfort this wise older mentor

was to Mary in the three months they had together (described by Dr Luke in 1:39-45). The power of a wise mentor who knew and loved God and the Scriptures was a great gift to Mary. Her ability to encourage Mary by focussing on her prospective child above her own was a forerunner of his words 30 years later of Jesus, 'He must increase, I must decrease', (John 3:30). The power of *life words*, in contrast to *death words* (see Proverbs 18:21), is seen in Elizabeth's words about, and to, Mary, 'Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her' (Luke 1:45). The apostle Paul commends a similar thoughtfulness to believers in our churches in Ephesians 4:29 and Colossians 4:6. **Considered words are a great gift we can bring to others, especially when they are facing anxiety-producing circumstances.**

That Mary's soul and spirit magnified and rejoiced in the Lord did not flow from her feelings but out of her faith in the Lord whom she knew as her God and addressed as *my Saviour* (1:46). She knew the God of the Old Testament, who, in showing her mercy, was acting in character by exalting a humble servant rather than the proud rulers of either the Roman Empire or Israel. In this way she is speaking of the One true King, the Lord Jesus, who would change the world one person at a time by *extending mercy to those who fear him in every generation* (1:50), *lifting up the humble and filling the hungry with good things* (1:52-53) and all the time *increasing the true descendants of Abraham* (1:55) as they turn to and trust the Lord Jesus.

Mary's song is revolutionary, not as a call to arms, but to disarm us of any and every pretence to pride in ourselves, our homes, our churches and nations. **When Jesus is embraced, we have a pattern to live by and a Saviour to sustain us and encourage us in every challenge and trouble.**

We sing Mary's song, not to elevate Mary, but to honour and obey the Son she bore, who said, '... *blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it*' (Luke 11:28). In emulating her example of humble service, we find that, as Christ is formed more and more in us, (Galatians 4:19) our homes and our hearts will be blessed by God as bearers of Christ. Could there be a greater calling and gift to our anxious and troubled world than this?

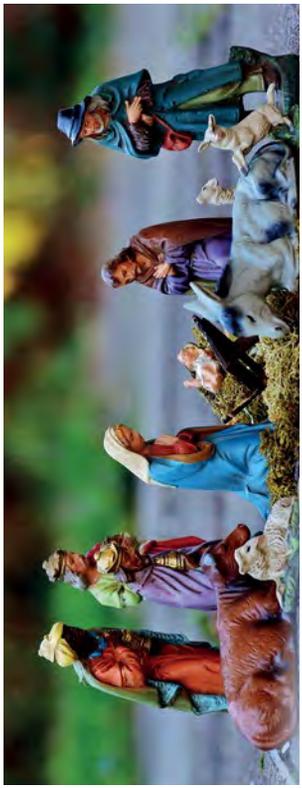
Peter Brain

Photo: Sixteen miles out on Unsplash



Journeying through Advent 2022

DECEMBER

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
01 Give thanks that the hope of Christ shines as light in the darkness	02 Ask God to give you hope and expectation for your Advent journey	03 Reflect on how the events of this year may affect your attitude to the season	04 Consider your "to do" list this Advent. Is there scope to simplify in any way?	05 Thank God that as we journey to the newborn Christ our risen Lord accompanies us	06 Choose a Bible verse about the nativity and use it as an inspiration for prayer	07 Pray for those whose difficult lives are more hard to bear in this season of good cheer
08 Give thanks for our Prince of Peace, and for our call to be peace-makers in the world	09 Pray for the message of Christmas to be heard amidst the season's commercialisation	10 Thank God for Mary's obedience. Is there something you sense God is asking of you?	11 Pray for areas of the world where there will be no peace this Christmas	12 Choose a favourite carol and use it as an inspiration for prayer	13 How would you explain the meaning of the nativity to someone who had never heard?	14 Pray for refugees spending Christmas away from home and family
15 Give thanks that the love of Christ brings forgiveness and new mercies every day	16 As you write cards or send email greetings pray God's blessing for the recipients	17 Read an account of the nativity in a different Bible version for a fresh insight	18 On your Advent journey pray for all who are seeking Christ for the first time	19 As you taste a seasonal treat give thanks for Christ who came as the bread of life	20 Think of a good memory from a past Christmas and thank God for it	21 Pray for families who struggle to provide necessities and treats for their family
22 Reflect on what may lie ahead in the coming year. Be honest with God about your hopes and concerns	23 Pray for the bereaved and families who will be apart or in conflict this Christmas	24 Pray for the homeless that they will find shelter during this season	25 Joy to the world, the Lord has come! Let earth receive her King!			

Unnumbered Blessings

Every day we ask ourselves a multitude of questions: What will I do today? What outfit will I wear? What shall I have for dinner tonight? Which school will be best for my children? Where can I go for holidays?

Imagine, just for a minute, that the questions we asked ourselves each day were very different: What will I do if my husband doesn't get paid again this week? Will there be enough food to feed my family? Can I afford to keep sending my children to school, and what will happen to them if they don't receive an education? What if my children get sick and I can't pay for medical treatment? For many of the wives of clergy in North Kigezi, Uganda, these are painfully real and relevant questions.

These women often live very difficult lives. Poverty stares them in the face every day. Day after day, week after week, their lives are characterised by hard work – growing food to feed their children, working to earn money for education, and often being physically isolated from their husbands who may be posted in a parish some distance away from the family plot of land. Many live without reliable electricity, running water, or transport.

In July this year I had the privilege of spending two weeks with these precious women, seeing and hearing the joys and challenges of their lives, and sharing with them some encouragement from God's word. As we met together at a Clergy Wives' Conference, we looked at how God interacted with three women in the Bible. The sinful woman in Luke's Gospel was completely known and forgiven. Hannah, in the Old Testament, was heard and comforted. Mary of Bethany was welcomed and deeply satisfied as a disciple of Jesus. God used each of these women's stories to encourage and strengthen the Ugandan women for whom life is often so very challenging.

I thought I was going to Uganda to give to our sisters there. Little did I realise that I would be by far the

greater recipient of blessing – they would give me far more than I gave them. Despite their lack of so many things which we might call essential to living, our Ugandan sisters are full in so many ways.

They are full of faith. In the uncertainty and harshness of their lives, they trust God to provide. They depend on him every day for all they need. They are full of joy. To hear them sing their praises to God is gold. They don't just sing with their mouths; they sing with their whole selves. A common phrase on their lips is: 'God is good, all the time', and they really believe it. In good times and hard times, God is good! And they are full of love. These women embraced me with incredible warmth and generosity. I was a stranger from the other side of the world, and yet, they welcomed me as a beloved sister in Christ.

The lives of these women look very different to our own. The questions of life they ask are not the same as ours. But we share an unbreakable bond. We are united in Christ. Like us, they have committed their lives to following Jesus, to serve him, and to declare the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. Though separated by vast stretches of land and sea, together we can raise our voices and sing:

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word –
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.



Sharon Kirk



Finding Jesus in the Storm

The following statistics were announced in mid-2022 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- Over two in five Australians aged 16-85 years (43.7% or 8.6 million people) had experienced a mental disorder at some time in their life
- One in five (21.4% or 4.2 million people) had a 12-month mental disorder
- Anxiety was the most common group of 12-month mental disorders (16.8% or 3.3 million people)
- Almost two in five people (39.6%) aged 16-24 years had a 12-month mental disorder

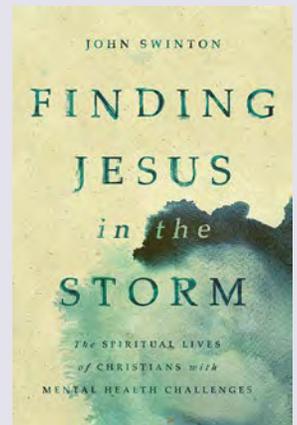
They come from the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2020-2021. The figures refer to individuals who have a diagnosable disorder that significantly interferes with their wellbeing. A person does not need to meet the criteria for a mental disorder to be negatively affected by their mental health. Mental ill-health affects and is affected by many factors and impacts not only the individual but also their families and carers.

The statistics and my summary make for challenging reading. It leaves a difficult question for us: How can we understand and relate to the lives of Christians with mental health challenges? Well-known author, Professor John Swinton, has written much about pastoral care. His latest book *Finding Jesus in the Storm* is published by SCM Press and tackles this question in many helpful ways.

The text is very accessible and can be read in small bites. After the introduction, there are five parts: The art of description, Redescribing diagnosis, Redescribing depression, Hearing voices and Redescribing bipolar disorder. Each part is then divided into chapters. These are further divided into short sections so that the reader can choose any one topic quickly and easily. The conclusion examines aspects of healing from five points of view.

'The purpose of this book is to provide readers with rich, deep and thick descriptions of the spiritual experiences of Christians living with mental health challenges... This book is about how

Christians living with severe mental health challenges experience their faith lives and strive to live life in all its fullness in the presence of sometimes deeply troubling experiences' (page 2). Swinton starts from John 10:10 and argues that Christians with such challenges can live life well, faithfully and loving Jesus even through the most terrifying storms.



The book urges us to change our language and descriptions about mental health challenges in ways that can help us overcome misrepresentation and stigma. This new term replaces the terms 'mental illness' and 'mental health issues' because it '...focuses our attention on what enables us to remain healthy in the midst of psychological distress... The shift from illness to challenge offers a positive and forward-facing orientation' (page 7). For me this new term takes away the stigma by permitting us all to say that we have such challenges from time to time, such as the bereavement process or the loss of confidence upon starting a new job or coming to terms with loss of physical and thinking abilities as part of the ageing experience.

The most common diagnosis globally is depression, which can lead to suicide in some situations. Swinton recognises that these terms evoke anxiety, hurt and fear in us and assures us from scripture that nothing '...will be able to separate us from the love of God.' (Romans 8:38-39). Whilst God does not abandon those who are depressed or suicidal, the action of ending one's life is not part of God's very best for us. Suicide is a tragedy and a loss and is never to be encouraged or seen as a positive good. There is a risk of dual thinking here: if the death was due to someone's mind, then there is a spiritual problem, but if it has to do with the body, it is seen as a medical issue. Better then to start from God's point of view of loving all his creatures and providing them with resources like faith and joy to support them through life's sufferings. Swinton suggests a different perspective on depression

as being not simply the absence of happiness. Starting from Paul's list of the spiritual gifts, he argues that joy is the exact opposite of depression and '...the joy of the Lord is our strength...' (Neh 8.10). He proposes that: joy is best not equated with happiness, which is a passing emotion; suffering is an aspect of joy and major depression is not about sadness but an experience of a deep loss of joy. So, depression becomes a spiritual experience.

The author employs a definition of joy from William Jennings: 'Joy is an act of resistance against all of the forces of despair. Joy is a work that can become a state which can become a way of life' (page 80). Joy is not then some desired outcome but is the key to resistance within the struggle. Unlike happiness, joy is not a feeling, it is the fact of the assured presence of Jesus in our lives. It is that presence of Jesus that yields the fruit of the Spirit, including joy, in our lives. Joy is also a gift from God. The presence of Jesus does not pass, even for those experiencing mental health challenges. From this standpoint, Swinton argues that depression is not an absence of happiness, nor the presence of sadness, but is an oppressor in the ongoing struggle to find and cling to joy.

The chapter which particularly appealed to me was called 'Finding God in the darkness – testifying to the presence of an absent God' because I enjoy the intensity and range of feelings described in the Psalms. Swinton examines some Psalms of orientation where God is in his heaven and life is good. Then come Psalms of lament, where the people cry to God in their lostness. Finally come

the Psalms of reorientation, where the writers move into a new mode of living. It is in the Psalms of lament that the feelings run hot with numbness, pain and anguish graphically experienced. Add then a sense of abandonment by God and, like Job, it feels as if everything has been stripped away. 'Depression is a bewildering experience that tears away at our certainties about God, self and others and replaces them with... nothing' (page 95). At that moment, a person experiences such an intensity of suffering that it is called affliction. 'Affliction is a condition of the soul insofar as it seems to consume every aspect of one's life, leaving one with a deep sense of nothingness, a deprivation rather than a present thing.' (page 96) This helps us to grasp why the desire to end it all can creep to the surface of a person's thinking. The Psalms then help the person to perceive God in a new way. God can be trusted and we can be certain of what we hope for and yet cannot see. Such trust shifts perspective and reorientates our understanding of the presence of God even though he feels absent. Living faithfully means learning to live well with unanswered questions and to avoid the temptation to turn mysteries into puzzles. Only through trust in God and his promises do we find our hope.

Reading this book has challenged my attitudes and the ways I approach persons with mental health challenges. I recommend the book to those who offer pastoral care inside churches and into the wider community.



Peter Dyke

Psalm 117 (NIV)

¹Praise the LORD, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.

²For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD
endures forever.

Praise the LORD.



Make Known His Might, the Deeds His Arm Has Done

I want to tell you about some of the deeds the Lord has done for me and my family when my husband, Ben, took long service leave in 2022. We knew this was coming but didn't have any definite plans. I wanted to do something significant and felt that 10 weeks of surfing and soaking up beach and sunshine might perhaps be a bit too long for us. The dates were in our diary and plans for someone to fill in for Ben's work were in place. It was six weeks away and we had absolutely nothing planned. It wasn't that we hadn't tried or thought about what to do but NOTHING seemed right. One day, I was travelling with my friend, Sharon Kirk, who shared with me about a trip to Uganda she had coming up. As the information spilled out, I wondered if this would be an answer to our long service leave prayer. The dates were exactly in the time frame that worked for us. We knew the missionaries in Uganda that Sharon and the team were visiting. We even knew some of the team members!

A few days after my conversation with Sharon I suggested that Ben ring the team leader of the trip. Following the phone call, we began making plans and started to book flights. There were several prayers we prayed as a family regarding visas, immunisations, accommodation, dates for flights; there was so much that needed to come together to get our family of 5 ready to go. Let me tell you of the deeds that God did in this time of preparation.

- When we pulled out our passports every one of them was valid.
- Visas were obtained online without too much trouble.
- We received our immunisations within the time frame needed to leave the country.
- We found mosquito nets (necessary when travelling to Uganda) on sale.

One thing after another worked as we needed. All along God knew what we needed and he went before us.

I had hoped we might be able to see a bit of Uganda as tourists even though our primary



reason for going was the clergy and clergy wives' conference. However, on our way from the airport to the conference we were able to stop for two nights at a safari park – another blessing provided by our good heavenly Father, who gives good gifts. We enjoyed seeing hippos, crocodiles, baboons, zebra, water buffalo, giraffes, monkeys and more!!

Cody, a teenage boy, was already part of the team going to Uganda. He would be giving talks in some schools and also helping at the Bible college library. Fletcher, Hudson and Lincoln were able to join in with those plans. Another wonderful blessing God had organised! The boys spent time cutting and pasting borrowing slips into the library books and also stuck call numbers on the many books we took with us for the library. The boys were able to stamp and shelve the books too. Lots of work was completed in the Bible college library and it was a joy to be part of it. The children did some presentations about Australia in three Ugandan schools and they could see what school life was like there. Ben helped in a discussion group at the clergy conference and preached in churches on the Sundays we were there. At the clergy wives' conference I acted out a couple of Bible stories to help bring them to life visually. As a family we are so grateful to God for making it possible for us to go to Uganda. In His kindness he used us to do some helpful things while we were there. These are just some of the *many deeds the Lord has done for us*.

Ruth France



Over the Fence

Run

I had not always run.

Our 15-year-old son, whippet-thin and blessed with a long stride, had set his sights on making the NSW State Schools final in that most murderous of distances, the 1500m. Every afternoon for months, in freezing weather, he would run; a lean, solitary figure wearing a track around the local cricket-ground perimeter. In previous years, and for the sake of variety, his younger brother, who bore similar genetics, would run with him over much longer distances – taking them well beyond the residential town limit, at which point motherly caution prompted me to offer myself as a sort of chaperone in joggers.

Our son achieved his goal, which provided him with complete satisfaction and an immediate resolve to abandon running altogether. This caused us no alarm – both boys were keen cricketers and soccer players. It was simply that the solitary nature of running had lost its charm. But not so for me. I had developed a love of the very things that my sons had found unappealing – rhythm, monotony, quietude. Prior to this, running any sort of reasonable distance had been an impossibility due to childhood asthma. Weekend sport had also not been part of my experience, which meant that I had emerged into my early 40s with wonderfully preserved knee cartilage, and not a whiff of a rotator cuff injury, meniscal bucket-handle tear, ACL rupture or any other such disabling legacy from a sporting youth.

Over the next ten years I would run in the most remarkable places as ministry saw our family move across Australia twice. Scenes of green paddocks and fat contented Shorthorns would be replaced with brilliant white beaches and pods of dolphins. Later still the scenery would change again to butterflies and mountains and creeks with arresting signs written in German to watch out for crocodiles – so curious that the abrasive consonants of 'Achtung!' shouted an urgent, universal warning that spoke louder than the local dialect.

After several years of happy running, and with the encouragement of my family, I bought a pair of proper running shoes for an eye-watering price and decided to set some goals. I wanted to run a half-marathon, a distance of 21.1km. There would be no time fixed; as a solitary runner there was no pressure whatsoever. On one ordinary day I was at about the 17km mark along a section of uninspiring coastal scrub when the pain hit. I was well-accustomed to fatigue-based pain, but this searing hot pain screamed 'physiotherapist' at every agonising step.

I sat, waiting for the verdict. Our family physiotherapist was a laconic individual. However, for a brief, unguarded moment his voice revealed his excitement, rising ever so slightly in pitch and tempo. After one swiftly delivered, astute (and very painful) diagnostic manipulation he declared that I had an uncommon sporting injury. My chest momentarily swelled with the compliment – how exciting to join the elite! With complete professionalism he offered me more information whilst clearly inwardly dying to scurry home and tell his wife he had correctly diagnosed a rarity that he had only ever read about in Uni days. Apparently, I had a condition called pes anserinus, an overuse injury of the three-forked tendinous system that braces the inner aspect of the knee. The tripod-like arrangement of the tendons had reminded early anatomists of the spread of a bird's foot, hence the translation 'foot of the goose.' My delight faded fast. 'Over-use.' Not that exciting. 'Painful.' Even less so. 'Rare.' Only because sensible people would stop. 'Goose.' Self-explanatory.

Six months of painful home-rehabilitation and frustration followed. Any disobedience in the face of my physio's excellent advice to take a break from running resulted in swift retributive pain. I glumly took to walking a bit, swinging my leg from the hip, plank-like to avoid activating the ruined fibres. Exercises involving foam objects and postures that bordered on the obscene became part of daily life. Slowly, with the passage of time, the fibres knitted. Having learnt my lesson, I

religiously followed instructions and painstakingly started from the beginning, gradually increasing distances with a newly-attentive ear to the protestations of my body.

A year later, I would run a half-marathon with strangers in a wonderfully organised community event in a new town. It would be a deeply satisfying experience, where I would finish slightly above average for my age group. Once the lactic burn after-effects in my thighs had faded and flights of stairs ceased to be a sort of domestic Everest, I reflected more deeply on the Biblical parallels between running and living a purposeful life of faith. I had experienced, in some small measure, the human side of the Corinthian parable: 'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run... they do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.'

I knew how to run long distance races despite pain, discouragement and exhaustion to achieve a human 'crown'. My crown, a small metallic disc inscribed with the word 'Finisher' had gone straight to the Special Things Cabinet. But did I really know how to run the far greater race – the

Photo: Nathalie Desiree Mottet on Unsplash



life of persistent faith? I had come very close to abandoning my goal in the face of a self-inflicted knee injury. How much more might serious illness, unexpected grief, unfaithful friends or a treacherous congregation cause a believer to cast aside the heavenly crown of eternal life?

The answer to these questions came on an early-morning run some months later. At season's hip, the oppressive humidity of summer had given way to mornings of low-lying mist and filtered sunlight, the mountains rising above a soft bed of low cloud. I rounded a corner to see, stretching for untold kilometres, endless fields of sunflowers. Their heads bent in reverence and their strong stems partly hidden by the ground mist, every single face was attentive to the rising sun – thousands upon thousands of plants all uniformly seeking the life-giving warmth that would soon climb into the morning sky.

I ran between the sunflower fields, dwarfed by the giant plants flanking the unfenced path. My presence was inconsequential to them, my shadow passed over them and they were undisturbed. They remained resolute, seeking the sun as they had every day of their lives.

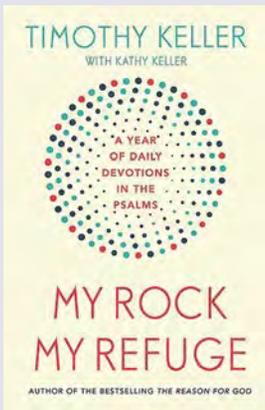
The sunflowers had answered the question as to how to run the greater race without their ever taking a single step. These sunflowers were not in their prime, in fact their lives were almost spent, yet every moment of their existence from beginning to near-end, had been spent orientated firmly and fixedly on their one source of life, and that alone. And in this way they had wordlessly proclaimed that which we know to be true: the eternal crown will come to those who set their hearts and minds on Jesus, the sole source of life.

Look to Him. And run.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2-3

Virginia Grice

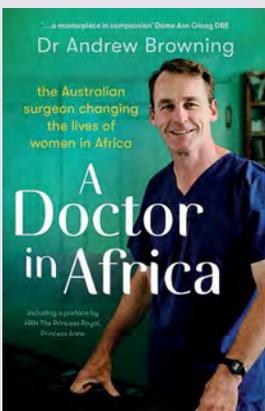
You might enjoy reading...



My Rock, My Refuge

The Psalms are known for their ability to comfort and make sense of grief, loss, confusion, and even anger. They assist us in pouring out our hearts to God while simultaneously redirecting us back to our true position before him. After spending time in the Psalms during periods of

questioning, illness, uncertainty and pain, Tim and Kathy Keller have honed the lessons they learned about themselves as complex, suffering humans, and the merciful, compassionate God of the Bible. These spiritual truths, distilled into 365 days, can strengthen those feeling weak or vulnerable on their own journey. Each reading offers wisdom for the day and a way to process needs and troubles before God. Beyond this, they also seek to equip with the knowledge that we are both more deeply sinful than we can comprehend and yet, above all reason, loved to the skies.

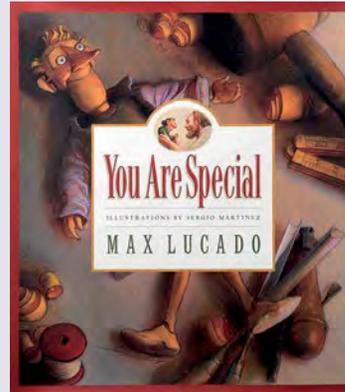


A Doctor in Africa

For those already aware of *The Hospital by the River*, this latest instalment by Australian Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Andrew Browning, is both heartening and inspiring. If the names of his colleagues, Reg and Catherine Hamlin are new to you, *A Doctor in*

Africa provides an introduction to their work in Ethiopia, before recounting the expansion of fistula surgeries and prevention into other African countries, including Uganda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. The writing itself is accessible, with carefully described details and much repetition to aid the reader. The challenge comes from reading about lives so wholly committed to serving the

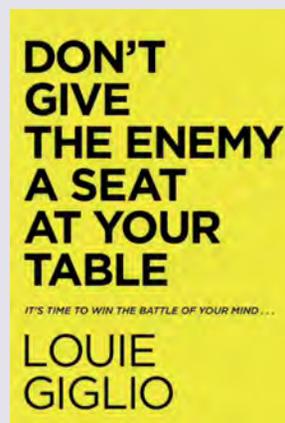
poorest and most marginalised women and the sacrifices made to do so. It's almost impossible to read this book and not reflect on our own life choices. It's equally impossible, though, to read this book and not give thanks to God for the dedication, skills and opportunities he has provided to alleviate some of the world's extreme suffering. Perhaps best of all, there is the option of contributing to this ongoing work in Africa.



You Are Special

Max Lucado has been writing books to enhance people's relationship with God for over three decades, and it may be that his picture books offer his most finely tuned insights.

This is the first in a series that revolves around Punchinello, Lucia and other wooden creatures known as Wemmicks. And it's difficult not to see some striking similarities between these hand-carved creations and ourselves. In *You Are Special*, Punchinello notices that unlike those who are either burdened by the grey dots attached to them by other Wemmicks, or elated by the gold stars bestowed upon them, Lucia has no discernible dots or stars. By way of explanation Lucia takes Punchinello to meet Eli, the Wemmick's maker. Punchinello discovers that, as he spends regular time with Eli and begins to care more about Eli's opinion than that of the other Wemmicks, the marks have much less power to stick.



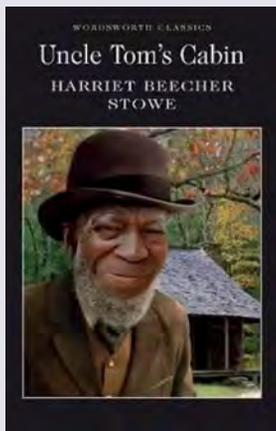
Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table

Spiritual warfare is something we know exists, but it doesn't necessarily register frequently in our thinking. Louie Giglio relates a time, where after a long period in which he was unjustly accused and his

ministry jeopardised, he was finally vindicated. He

texted a friend in celebration and waited in joyful anticipation for the response. Only nine words were sent back: 'Don't give the enemy a seat at your table'.

Initially deflated by his friend's chastening advice, Louie grew to value it immensely. In writing this book, Louie has attempted to become a similar friend, helping us to daily recognise Satan's voice and, even more importantly, our heavenly father's. Through reminding us of God's unfailing, faithful love and how to apply his word to our battles, Louie's intention is to leave us better prepared to stand firm against the devil's schemes, thereby giving glory to God. Even though each reader's idea of a feast could look different to Louie's, the analogy from Psalm 23 is clearly developed.

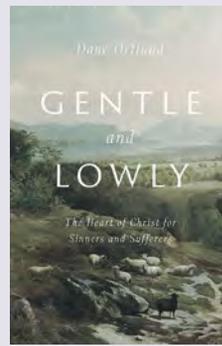


Uncle Tom's Cabin

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote this novel in response to the racial injustice she witnessed in Ohio. In the aftermath of George Floyd's death, this book, credited with igniting the American Civil War, continues to feel timely and relevant. Despite being first

published in 1851, the suspense is immediate, the language reasonably straightforward and characters such as Aunt Chloe, Eliza, Eva, Tom and the cruel Legree remain influential and memorable. Many who have read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* talk openly about scenes where they wept or laughed or grew incensed. One woman, now in her eighties, discussed how reading it as a teenager changed her perspective on suffering for the course of her life, increasing her ability to deal with both difficult and tragic situations. Through each powerful chapter Beecher Stowe's evangelical theology remains apparent: God rejoices in the repentance of the sinner, no matter how vile their deeds. The only caveat – it might take a summer to read it.

As a book available in the public domain, there is the added benefit that it can be downloaded to a device free of charge from somewhere like Project Gutenberg.



Gentle and Lowly

Next to the Bible, *Gentle and Lowly* has the potential to be the most encouraging book on a bookshelf. Reading it may be somewhat akin to searching for buried gems, however, as it requires time and effort to reveal the treasure

contained within. One of the strengths of *Gentle and Lowly* is that it acquaints modern readers with humble, thoughtful puritan theologians such as John Bunyan, Thomas Goodwin, John Owen and Jonathan Edwards. Even though the language the Puritans used sometimes seems awkward now, the author, Dane Ortlund, is always at hand to explain and explore the Puritans' thinking. If you were only able to make your way through a third of the book, you would still be blessed by hearing expounded the astounding facts that God's heart is even more drawn to those caught in sin than in suffering, and that he is able to deal gently with the ignorant and the wayward.



Wonder

Whilst *Wonder* is found in the children's section of bookstores, it has the capacity to touch any age group. It centres on a ten-year-old boy named August, adjusting to fifth grade after being home-schooled. He has an older sister, Via, a dog called Daisy,

two supportive parents and a badly deformed face despite 27 surgeries. The novel is separated into eight parts, with Augie, Via and four of their friends each telling part of the story. Amongst others, the reader also meets Mr Browne, a young, innovative teacher who introduces his class to precepts such as 'When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind', and the perceptive, wise principal, Mr Tushman, who at speech day, endeavours to motivate students to 'act a little kinder than is necessary', in the hope that someone, 'somewhere, someday, may recognise... the face of God'. Great news is that author, R.J. Palacio, followed *Wonder* with the sequel *Augie & Me*.

Around the Dioceses

ARMIDALE

'Supporting Singles in Churches - A Family Affair' was the title of the event preceding the Diocese of Armidale's AGM on Saturday October 15, taking the form of an in-depth, armchair interview with two single women and a widow, followed by a book review and morning tea. 50 people attended.



CANBERRA-GOULBURN



The NSW State Conference 'Intergenerational Faith' was held in Canberra from 21-23 October at the Australian Centre for Christianity in Barton,

with addresses by Rev Dr Tim Watson, Dr Ruth Lukabyo and 3 workshop presenters. Bishop Mark Short and his wife Monica participated in the whole weekend. The conference commenced with dinner on the Friday night at the Press Club and concluded with a cruise on Lake Burley Griffin at Sunday lunch time. Look out for comprehensive report in a future issue of *Mia Mia*.

BRISBANE

On Tuesday evening, September 20, 2022, a most uplifting service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, was held in St John's Cathedral, Brisbane.

The Cathedral was filled with people from all walks of life, including members of numerous organisations, Queensland faith leaders and heads of churches, Diocesan clergy, Archdeacons, Bishops and Archbishops, our Queensland Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young, and her husband, Professor Graeme Nimmo, our former Governor General and Queensland Governor, Dame Quentin Bryce, former Queensland Governor, Mrs Leneen Ford and other dignitaries. It was with pride that members of Anglican Mothers' Union Australia attended the service to pay our respects to, and show our love for, our late beloved Queen and Patron, Queen Elizabeth II. All were welcomed by our Archbishop, the Most Rev'd Dr. Philip Aspinall.



Kris Frith, Marjorie Voss, Marilyn Dunning

The music was provided by the cathedral organist and choir, Acknowledgment of Country given by Mr Paul Poulson (a Munnunjali man) and the bidding conducted by our Archbishop. Our Governor and the Rev'd David Baker read the Bible, the sermon was given by the Most Rev'd

Mark Coleridge, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane and Prayers of Commemoration, introduced by Rev'd Canon Julia Van Den Bos and led by Queensland Heads of Churches, all combined to demonstrate our UNITY in the high esteem with which we all held our beloved Queen Elizabeth II.

The service concluded with the Blessing after which The Last Post and Reveille were played magnificently on the organ before the whole congregation joined in singing the Royal Anthem – a moving conclusion to a very emotional and heartfelt service.

Marjorie Voss

SUNNYBANK

One item always on the Mothers' Union, Sunnybank, program is a visit to the Mission to Seafarers at the Port of Brisbane. Each time we visit we are greeted very warmly, with arms open to receive the bundles of clothing, books, beanies and magazines we bring. One year, a member took along her husband's suits, one of which was eagerly snapped up by a seaman. He did look very dapper in his new suit and he was very pleased with it as he walked out the door!

During the coronavirus pandemic seafarers have not been permitted to leave their ships while in port and, for some sailors, 'home' has been a motel room. The rules that govern this industry state that when seafarers' contracts conclude they must be accommodated somewhere until there is a ship to take them home. (The men are not paid while they are travelling home). Men from the Polynesian Islands were missing their homes, families and the colours and sounds of their culture and were very lonely while they were accommodated in a small room.

During our visit we heard from a member of Border Force, who spoke about the different ways drugs can be brought into the country. We were encouraged to report anything that looks 'a bit strange', for example, trawlers going out to sea during a storm. Even the reporting of something small or seemingly insignificant is better than not reporting it. During lunch a volunteer from the Mission spoke to us about her life working for the

Mission and some of the awkward moments she encountered along the way.

It was a sunny day, in joyful company, and we look forward to another visit next year.

Marcia Williams



L to R: Narelle Blunt, Jan Tully, Gail Jender

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

North Rockhampton

We have had a rather busy time over the last couple of months. July saw us celebrating our MU birthday with Guest Speaker, Christine Brain, Editor of *Mia Mia* magazine. She was very informative and had us doing exercises analysing articles for interest, readability and appeal. Christine gave us hints on how to encourage wider readership of *Mia Mia*. This was followed by lunch at the Sports Club with members from neighbouring MU Groups.

We took up the challenge to plant a tree for World Tree Day. As it was a Sunday it was part of our congregational worship service. A Bottle Tree, donated by an MU member, Mrs. Shirley Shannon, was planted in the church grounds and Mother's Union members provided morning tea.

On August 9 we hosted Mary Sumner Day at St. Paul's Cathedral, Rockhampton, which was well attended by MU members and others. We provided a sumptuous morning tea and enjoyed a cuppa and fellowship afterwards.

We are currently knitting scarves, beanies and socks and buying biscuits for the Mission to Seafarers in Gladstone and compiling Pamper Packs for the Women's Shelter.

We are very grateful for all the support we receive from the congregation.

Roslyn Dolby-Glover



NORTH QUEENSLAND

Country of Study Celebration in Townsville

This year the country we chose to study was Vanuatu as we have been looking at countries in our Zone. We were fortunate to have Alice, who comes from Vanuatu and is one of the members of The Church of Ascension at Heatley, volunteer to hold our study day at her home. We were excited to hear that she was going to prepare us a lunch in her island tradition and also show and teach us some of the craft from her area.



On arrival we were welcomed to her back yard, which looked like a tropical paradise and, when we were all seated, we were welcomed by her husband who has taught in Vanuatu. We learned a little from him then, after partaking of a delicious lunch, we heard from Alice's granddaughter and her son who shared some of their history, geography and traditions. Alice finished that section by showing some of her treasures. One very interesting item was what was used for money at one time. It was a mat! Very different to what we imagined.

We then were shown how to weave a fish out of palm leaves. It was an exciting way to share Alice's culture and appreciate more the concerns and problems they face.

Vivienne Feltham



PERTH

Warnbro

Each year St Brendan's, Warnbro, Mothers Union hosts two 'Friendship Morning Teas' to which members invite friends and newcomers to the parish. Recently, as the spring date drew closer, our Prime Minister announced a national public holiday by which to honour and remember the late Queen Elizabeth II.



With the approval of Parish Council we decided that, instead of meeting as usual in a member's home, we would open up the church for three hours on the morning of September 22. Parishioners were invited to come in at any time, light a candle, pray and reflect in the quietness.

Once each hour prayers were spoken from the lectern and a hymn sung, each chosen by a different person, one church warden and two MU members. In between times, refreshments were ongoing in the hall. The table was spread with a beautiful cloth and the cups and saucers brought out, (which seemed more fitting for the Queen than our usual mugs.) Members provided the usual lavish spread and everyone enjoyed looking at souvenirs and memorabilia and sharing memories. We ended by singing 'God save the King', which concluded a very moving and memorable morning.

Felicity Williams

Wembley Downs

In 1962 a group of 32 women met in a private home in Wembley Downs to discuss the formation of a local branch of the Mothers' Union, and 60 years on we are still going. On 11 July we celebrated our 60th Anniversary with a service of Holy Communion, the presentation of three 60-year membership certificates and badges, two 25-year badges and lunch. A book is being collated entitled 'Members and Memories' in which members are invited to share their own personal story and recollections of MU. Also included are pages of our history, pictures, and stories of past events.



On 22 September members travelled to Kings Park to share fellowship, prayer for our city and those who work in it, lunch, and time in God's amazing wildflower garden located at this place.

As we move forward, each of us here at St Paul's MU endeavours to answer God's call by striving to uphold the promises we made when we became

members and sharing God's love by reaching out into our communities, locally and internationally.

Sue Farrell

THE MURRAY

Mary Sumner Day was celebrated at Strathalbyn with about 30 people present. After lunch we held our AGM. Ann Gardiner has stepped down from Prayer and Spirituality and this position has been taken up by Helen Cooke. We are very grateful to both women; Helen for being willing to take a position and to Ann for her dedication and love in this position for so many years

Jocelyn Williamson

WANGARATTA

On August 9, members from Albury, Bright, Corryong, Nagambie, Seymour, Wangaratta and Wodonga, and lone members from across the Diocese of Wangaratta, happily gathered to celebrate Mary Sumner Day at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Wangaratta. Special guest for the gathering was the Australian Provincial (National) President of the Mother's Union, Rev Anne Kennedy and her husband, Rob, who were made very welcome by all present.

The members enjoyed lunch in Purbrick hall and then Diocesan President, Jan Craig, welcomed our special guest, Anne, who spoke on the work of the MU across the world and in our far north and other dioceses. She congratulated the branches on their continuing good work and encouraged them to try their best to introduce young members to join this worthwhile organisation to continue on Mary Sumner's vision.

Diane Grant



Mary's Song of Praise

AND MARY SAID,

"My *soul* magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit *rejoices* in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with *favour* on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me *blessed*,
for the *Mighty One* has done great things for me,
and *holy* is his name;
indeed, his *mercy* is for those who fear him
from generation to *generation*.

LUKE 1:46-50

