

Diocese of The Murray, South Australia.

**THE MURRAY
CON-TRIBUTARY
NEWSLETTER**



“Encouraging families through faith in Action”

PRESIDENT'S LETTER.

June 2026

Dear Friends,

Winter is here now with rain in many parts of our state and we give thanks to God for relief from the drought conditions.

Celebrating 150 years of Mothers Union. On Lady Day we gathered at St Nicholas Church Seaford in the combined churches building. Our chaplain, Fr Daniel, led us in a service of Holy Communion, with the commissioning of our new executive committee, admission of a new member, and recognition of long years of service to three members. Following the service we had a delicious lunch in the cafe-with a birthday cake!

Our next opportunity to gather for a day of **fun and fellowship** will be **Saturday 11th July at Mt Barker**, to produce a **banner** which will be blessed and then travel around the diocese as a visual reminder to pray, canvas, and share all issues around **DV**. This workshop is being organised by our Social Issues and Action Coordinator, Sue. **It will run from 10.00-4.00 with lunch provided, and everyone is welcome to help, not just MU members.**

Mary Sumner Day will also be celebrated at Mt Barker on **Mon 10 August**, starting with a service of Holy Communion at 11.00 followed by our Annual General Meeting and a Diocesan Council meeting. Tea and coffee will be available from 10.30, but bring your own lunch.

Overseas news

In 2022 a report into the impact of the Mothers Union Burundi literacy and financial program which has been running since 2000 to combat poverty and promote gender equality and women's empowerment was done. The program has had a transformative impact on the participants personal relationship with God, women's participation in church, and improved self esteem. It has advanced the aims of MU by promoting legal marriage and positive parenting. Many more girls are attending school and 78% can afford higher education for their children. The program has contributed towards conflict resolution in the community. Most participants advocate against sexual and gender-based violence. 88% of female participants have increased personal income.

The Northern Outreach Fund supports the mission and the promotion of Christian family life in the Northern Territory, North West Australia, and North Queensland Dioceses. Our funds support projects already at work in these areas. I encourage you all to continue both prayer and financial support for our Overseas and Northern Outreach funds. Please pray also that someone will offer to take on the ONO coordinator role.

A prayer by Christine Jensen.

Gracious Lord, as we look back over the 150 years of Mothers Union we give great thanks for Mary Sumner's vision and the wonderful ministry of Mothers Union throughout the world.

We pray for Mothers Union in Australia and in each of our dioceses that we will continue to promote Christ's teaching on marriage and family life and so be a blessing to our nation.

Please give us wisdom and insight as we look to the future. May your name be hallowed and your kingdom come. Amen.

With my love, Caroline

Diary Dates

- Sat 11 July** **10.00-4.00 Banner Making Day at Mt Barker.**
- Mon 10 Aug** 11.00. Mary Sumner Day, AGM, and Council meeting at Mt Barker.
- Mon 28 Sept** 10.30 Executive meeting at Aberfoyle Park.
- Mon 9 Nov** 11.00. Wave of Prayer and Council Meeting at Aberfoyle Park.

Pentecost Homily from Fr Daniel

Acts 2.1-21 | 1 Corinthians 12.1-13 | John 20.19-23

Today we celebrate Pentecost: the great feast of the Spirit, often described as the birthday of the Church. But Pentecost should be thought of as less about the beginning of an institution and more about the beginning of a new kind of human community.

The gospel reading from John begins with fear. The disciples are gathered behind locked doors. They are uncertain, anxious, unsure what comes next. The world outside feels threatening, unstable, dangerous. And perhaps that image speaks more deeply to us than we might first like to admit.

Fear has a way of closing doors in human hearts. Fear makes us retreat into ourselves. Fear teaches us to distrust those who are different from us. Fear creates suspicion, division, defensiveness, and isolation. Communities, churches, and even nations can begin living behind locked doors.

And into that fearful room, Jesus comes and speaks the simplest and most necessary words: "Peace be with you."

Not condemnation. Not disappointment. Peace.

Then he breathes upon them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

That image is deeply important. In the scriptures, breath and spirit are intertwined. The Spirit is not something added onto creation later; the Spirit is woven into life itself from the beginning. In Genesis, the Spirit hovers over the face of the waters and God breathes life into humanity. In John's Gospel, the risen Christ breathes again upon frightened disciples, almost as though a new creation is beginning in their midst.

And what does this Spirit do?

The Spirit opens locked doors.

In Acts of the Apostles, people from many nations hear the good news in their own languages. Pentecost is not about everyone suddenly becoming the same.

The miracle is not the erasing of difference. The miracle is understanding across difference.

That matters.

Because human history so often moves in the opposite direction. We divide ourselves by language, culture, politics, theology, generation, class, and tribe. Difference becomes something to fear rather than something to receive as gift.

But at Pentecost, the Spirit creates unity without demanding uniformity.

And Paul develops exactly that vision in First Epistle to the Corinthians.

“There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.” One body, many members. Diversity is not a threat to the Church; diversity is how the Spirit works within the Church.

That is not always easy for us.

It is often easier to gather only with people who think like us, worship like us, vote like us, or share our preferences and assumptions. Yet the Spirit continually pushes the Church outward, beyond comfort and familiarity.

Perhaps that is one of the great challenges for the Church in our own time.

We live in a world increasingly fragmented and polarised. People speak past one another rather than listening. Public life often rewards outrage more than understanding. Even within the Church, there can be anxiety about change, fear of difference, fear of losing what feels familiar or secure.

And yet Pentecost reminds us that the Spirit is not at work in fear-driven isolation. The Spirit is at work wherever bridges are being built.

Whenever people truly listen to one another.

Whenever communities choose compassion over suspicion.

Whenever we move beyond “us and them.”

Whenever we discover that another person’s difference does not diminish us but enlarges our understanding of God.

Because none of us reflects the fullness of God alone.

We need one another.

The young and the old. The long-established and the newcomer. The confident and the questioning. Those full of hope and those carrying grief. Paul says we are members of one body precisely because no one part is sufficient on its own.

And perhaps Pentecost calls us to ask: where are the locked doors in our own lives? What fears keep us closed off from others? What assumptions prevent us from hearing the Spirit speaking through voices we did not expect?

For some, the locked door may be fear of change. For others, fear of vulnerability. Fear of not belonging. Fear of failure. Fear of those whose experiences differ from our own.

Yet the Spirit keeps moving toward those closed places, not with violence or coercion, but with breath, peace, and invitation.

The Church is healthiest not when it withdraws behind locked doors, but when it becomes a place of encounter: where strangers become neighbours, where burdens are shared, where dignity is recognised, and where the love of God becomes visible in ordinary acts of hospitality and reconciliation.

Pentecost does not promise that difference disappears. It promises that love can be greater than fear.

And perhaps that is the real miracle of the Spirit.

Not that everyone speaks the same language, but that people begin truly hearing one another.

Not that all conflict magically vanishes, but that reconciliation becomes truly possible.

Not that we all become identical, but that we all discover that we belong to one another in God.

May the Spirit continue to breathe through this parish community, opening what fear has closed, building bridges where divisions remain, and drawing us ever more deeply into the reconciling life and love of God.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 24, 2026

Don't miss out!!!

Banner making day

**Mount Barker Parish
Centre**

Sat. July 11th

10 to 4

Lunch provided

Liz Hampel: landlhampel@bigpond.com

Natalie Jones: natjoy01@mail.com