

MIA MIA

WINTER ISSUE *Mercy*

Praise be to the God and
Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ!

In his great mercy he has
given us new birth into a
living hope through the
resurrection of Jesus Christ
from the dead

ANGLICAN
MOTHERS UNION
AUSTRALIA

- 1 Peter 1:3

ANGLICAN MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA

VISION

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

MISSION

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

PURPOSE

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

AIM

Our aim is the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life.

OUR FIVE OBJECTIVES ARE:

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

Mia Mia Vol 110 No 4 ISSN 1326 7701

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MIA MIA

PRONOUNCED: HIGH-UH-HIGH-UH

Mia Mia is an Aboriginal word for a temporary hut or shelter, more commonly used to refer to a home.

Mia Mia is a quarterly magazine of Anglican Mothers' Union Australia.

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PRINTED BY

Snap Printing

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STOCK PHOTOS SOURCED FROM CANVA

WEBSITES

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UK: www.themothersunion.org

AN AUDIO VERSION OF MIA MIA IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE, WWW.MUAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU. ARTICLES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON CD. CONTACT YOUR DIOCESAN TREASURER OR THE EDITOR AT MIAMIA@MUAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

HAVE YOUR SAY IN MIA MIA

Contributions and insights are welcome. Please send all correspondence to the editor.

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

from the EDITOR



Dearest Readers, thank you for picking up this issue of Mia Mia. This issue is particularly special to me as it is my first as editor.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Mia Mia, this is a Mothers Union publication. Now, I myself am not a mother but that is the beauty of Mothers Union – it's for anyone who believes in "the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life."^{*}

I have been in Mothers Union my whole life, attending my first branch meetings as an infant in the arms of my mother. It is in these meetings where my mother met the woman who became my godmother, and her daughter, who is now my oldest friend. I grew up surrounded by Godly women and men who believed in the objectives of Mothers Union with their whole hearts; it was a blessing to grow in an environment that cared so deeply about the issues that affect women and families.

In our world, we know that there is a need to help families as they face the evolving challenges of the present day. Mothers Union has been helping families for 150 years, and I pray that we continue to support families and individuals with renewed vigour and strength, encouraging all to seek the Lord.

The theme of this issue is Mercy, a concept I have been thinking on more and more these days as current affairs become increasingly troublesome. There have always been, and will always be, people in power who have the ability to show mercy but choose to deny it from those who are suffering.

We see scripture tell us time and time again that we are to show love and mercy^{**}, yet so often we forget these commandments in times of trial or social unrest. Who are we to be selective with who we show mercy to? Does not the Lord tell us to love our neighbour as we love ourselves? There are no caveats in Matthew 22:39. How can we love our neighbour yet deny them mercy?

Psalm 103:8 says "the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and steadfast in love." I am thankful every day that we have been shown mercy, and are freed from the chains of sin. We have received mercy from God, now death cannot hold us, and we can live eternally through the Lord. As Christians, we want others to understand that the mercy we received in the form of salvation, is the greatest gift of all; the best way for us to explain this is to live out the word of the Lord and show God's love to all we meet.

Bethany Mills

^{*}See Aim.

^{**}See Luke 6:32-36, Matthew 5:7, Matthew 9:13, and James 2:13.

from the PRESIDENT



As worshipping Christians we often hear about and sing of God's mercy. For example, Psalm 103:8 describes God as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love. Yet, the word mercy is not a word we find in common usage. Dictionary meanings include forgiveness from someone who has the power to punish, leniency, and compassion. You might notice that these words invoke a position of authority over and the implied choice to exercise that authority with either positive or negative intent.

Therefore mercy is more than feeling sorry for another or performing an act of kindness. Mercy requires a deep connection between the person in need and the one extending mercy. I wonder if the rise of individualism has narrowed our social lens, pushing notions of mercy to the edges of our consciousness especially when it comes to some interpersonal relationships.

Mercy requires commitment; for us to enter into the reason another might seek or need mercy. To discover what is or has happened in that person's life for which they need mercy. Do they recognise their need for mercy, our mercy or God's mercy or both? Are we prepared to recognise their need and have the inclination to respond?

When working as a nurse, the need for mercy was easy to identify in many instances where the patient or their family did not have the 'power' to change their situation. To advocate for a patient in pain or emotional distress was the easy part. To get the medical and hospital systems to recognise that the merciful choice would be to keep a person in hospital a day or too longer to reduce the stress of a long bus trip home after discharge, was sometimes more difficult.

Yet what does all that mean for members of MU living Christ centred lives in the local community? The prophet Micah tell us that God is not looking for us to do things to attract his mercy, but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. A clergyman who had recently retired from a busy inner city parish ministering to many people with complex needs, shared how the parish needed it Mothers Union members. MU members were those who assisted with feeding programs, helped single mothers and supported young children. What a great tribute to living into Mary Sumner's vision to change the lives of families.

Robin Day



MOTHERS UNION

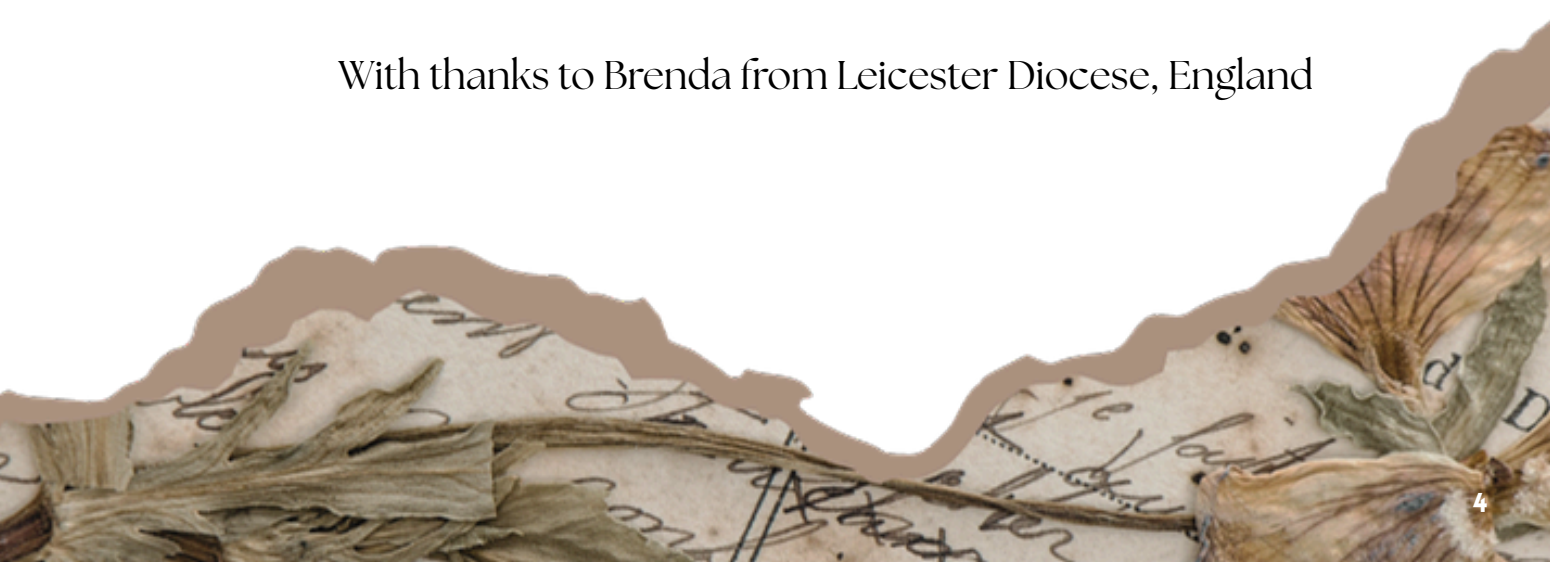
M – is for Mothers, working day by day.
O – is for the Objects that we promise to obey.
T – this is for Trying – we do this all the time.
H – is for Homes of every race and clime.
E – is for Education, keeping us informed.
R – that is for Reverence to our risen Lord.
S – for Social action – helpful hands and feet.

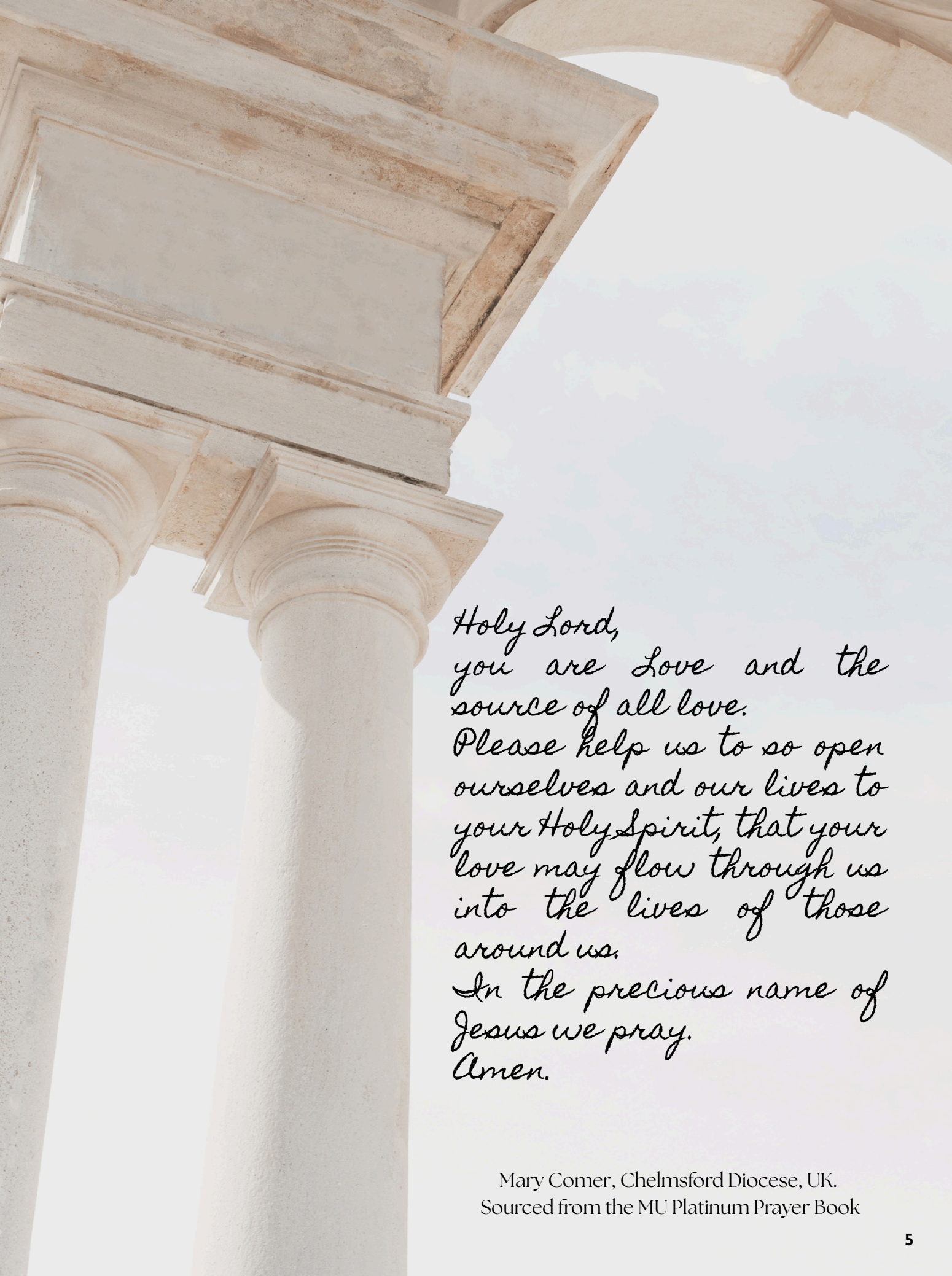
U – for Understanding all the people that we meet.
N – is for the Noontide hour when round the world we pray.
I – for Indoor members – who pray for us each day.
O – that stands for Overseas – our membership worldwide.
N – for Never giving up – but witnessing with pride.

This spells “MOTHERS UNION”

I hope that you can see,
That this name stands for much, much more – than making
cups of tea.

With thanks to Brenda from Leicester Diocese, England





Holy Lord,
you are Love and the
source of all love.
Please help us to so open
ourselves and our lives to
your Holy Spirit, that your
love may flow through us
into the lives of those
around us.
In the precious name of
Jesus we pray.
Amen.

Meet MIKAYLA

My name is Mikayla and I'm married to my wonderful husband Kam. We have two children. Our son Kayden is 2 and our daughter Ellie-Mae is 4 months old. I'm from New Zealand and my husband is from Mauritius but we now live in Geraldton, WA.

What do you love about being a Mum?

I love so many things about being a Mum. My top three would be:

- seeing my kids laugh and experiencing the world through their eyes. They find so much joy in the little things.
- I also love watching their unique personalities unfold.
- And I love all the cuddles.

What do you find hard about being a Mum?

The gap between the mum I am now compared with the mum I want to be. In my current season I feel a lot of growing pains as I strive to be the best mother for my kids. I fall short so often. I can feel God is changing my heart and I know it takes time to shake off the old and put on the new but I would like to hurry up and get there!

How does being a Christian help you as a Mum?

I'm learning to lean into God each day and rely on Him for strength. There have been many times when I have felt overwhelmed and after saying a quick prayer I feel extra strength comes from Him. My days are certainly a lot easier when I prioritise spending time with God and His Word. My kids definitely get a better mum too!

Photo provided by Mikayla.

PRAYER FOR FAMILIES

*God our Father,
be with us in our homes through this and every day;
help us when we are tired,
to control our tempers and to take thought for others;
make us loving and patient,
forgiving others as we hope to be forgiven,
that in our homes your law of love may reign;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(Frank Colquhoun, New Every Morning, BBC Publications 1985)

PARENTING PAGE

Children and Your Church

Does your church have resources for children (usually at the back of the church)? This is a great tool to assure families that they are welcome. But consider whether you might purchase children's bible story books for different age groups, not just colouring materials and toys.

A small church in a regional Diocese recently asked their Mothers' Union group if they would donate money or purchase bible story books on behalf of this church so they could have child-friendly resources in the children's area that helped visiting children learn about God. The Mothers Union group was happy to help.

For Grandparents

Sign up for the National Grandparents Conference on Saturday 29th August 2026 at Erina (Central Coast NSW) - in person and livestream. The conference aims to encourage Grandparents to think about their influence on their grandchildren and share their faith.

Check it out here: <https://ngmlegacy.com.au/2026-conference/>

Check out this website with articles about parenting

Something to think about - the value of involving your children in the acknowledgement of Anzac Day:

<https://growingfaith.com.au/articles/what-i-want-my-sons-to-carry-home-from-anzac-day>

Collated by

Elizabeth Parker

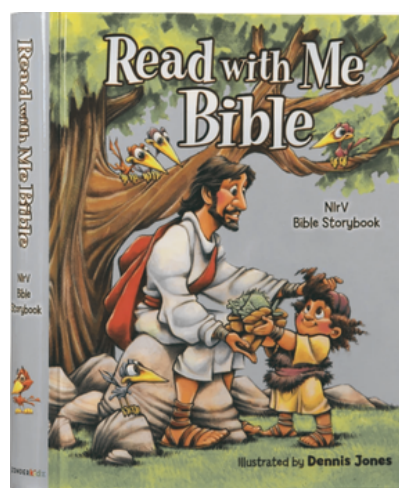
Vice President (Special Responsibility Parenting)
vicepresidentparenting@muaaustralia.org.au

Book Recommendation

Read With Me Bible: An NIRV Story Bible published by Zonderkidz 2006. Price: \$25-\$30.

A wonderful bible story book for children aged 4-8 years. Simple language that still sounds like the Bible and attractive illustrations, particularly in depicting well-known bible figures. I love it that the angels look macho and as if they mean business.

Available from Christian bookstores.



Podcast Recommendation

Timeless Parenting podcast on 'Thinking Christianly about Technology' with James and Simone Boswell.



*Mercy is a song, singing to my heart,
telling me it's okay, come just as you are*

I love these opening words of Mercy is a Song by Matthew West, because they sing directly to the heart. Deep within us is a longing to know that we are enough, that we are welcome, that we are loved, and that we can come carrying all that weighs upon us. We are reminded that God accepts us and meets us as we are. We can come with our successes and failures, our understanding and doubts, our joy and grief, and courage and fear, trusting that we will be met not with condemnation, but with grace. The gift of mercy sets us free from all that holds us captive, especially the exhausting belief that we must somehow earn God's love.

Mercy is much deeper than simple kindness or forgiveness. Mercy is the movement of God's heart towards humanity. It is love reaching out to us before we even know how to ask for it. In mercy, God sees us fully, not only for who we are, but for who we are becoming, and still chooses to draw near. Mercy reminds us that we are not defined by our worst moments, nor abandoned in our weakness. Instead, we are invited into relationship, restoration, and new life.

Mercy is a gift from God and brings gifts of its own: hope, faith, and love. Mercy gives hope because it reminds us that our mistakes are never the end of the story. God continually offers us another beginning, another chance to walk in his light. Mercy strengthens faith because it calls us to trust in a God whose love does not depend on our perfection. Even when we stumble, God remains faithful. Mercy also teaches us love, not only how to receive love for ourselves, but how to extend it to others with compassion, patience, and kindness. When we experience mercy deeply, we become gentler with ourselves and more gracious towards others. We begin to see people not through the lens of judgement, but through the eyes of Christ. And when we allow mercy to truly change us, it lingers within us, like a song.

Perhaps that is why I am drawn to Mercy is a Song. A song stays with us, it lingers with us, echoing in our hearts and minds long after the music fades. God's mercy does the same. It calls to us in moments of joy and sorrow, reminding us that we are never beyond God's reach. And when we truly hear that song, we are invited not only to receive mercy, but to become people who sing that same mercy into the lives of others. Have a beautiful day!

Blessings

Reverend Nicole
NATIONAL AND NEWCASTLE CHAPLAIN

WHO DESERVES GOD'S MERCY?

Receiving mercy is a wonderful experience.

It comes when you are down and it lifts you up. You are homeless, living on the streets. Someone comes and arranges for you to have a place to live, food to eat and companions who care.

That's mercy.

You are living in a place where there is no access to medical help, and you are chronically unwell. Someone comes by in an aptly named 'Mercy-Ship' and gives you the help you need free of any charge. And then makes sure that you are looked after in the future.

That's mercy.

You have lost your husband and are alone after many years. Your family lives far away. Your neighbour comes by every couple of days for a chat. They help arrange for the lawn to be mowed and for you to be driven to the shops.

That's mercy.

Mercy is love, it is compassion, it is care. Mercy has eyes to see need and a will to meet it. In particular, it is love towards those to whom we have no obligation. It is not so much putting food on the table for the family as showing hospitality to strangers who have no rights to your time or support.

Cont'd.



But there is something else special about mercy. The Bible says, 'Mercy triumphs over judgement' (James 2:3). Mercy is our expression of compassion to those who owe us big-time. Imagine that someone owed you \$100,000 and you waived the debt. Or someone offends you deeply in word or action and you forgave them instead of pursuing some judgement on them. That would be mercy.

For at the very heart of mercy is forgiveness. You do not take vengeance. You cleanse them of their sin by washing them with the forgiveness that they do not deserve.

For most people this is not natural. We wish to see people pay for what they have done. But then we realise that 'God is all merciful'. The forgiveness you have received from him because Christ died for you is an act of sheer mercy. You did not deserve it. And once that goes deep into your soul, you begin to show mercy, empowered by the Spirit of God. And this is what the Lord requires of you, 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly before your God' (Micah 6:8).

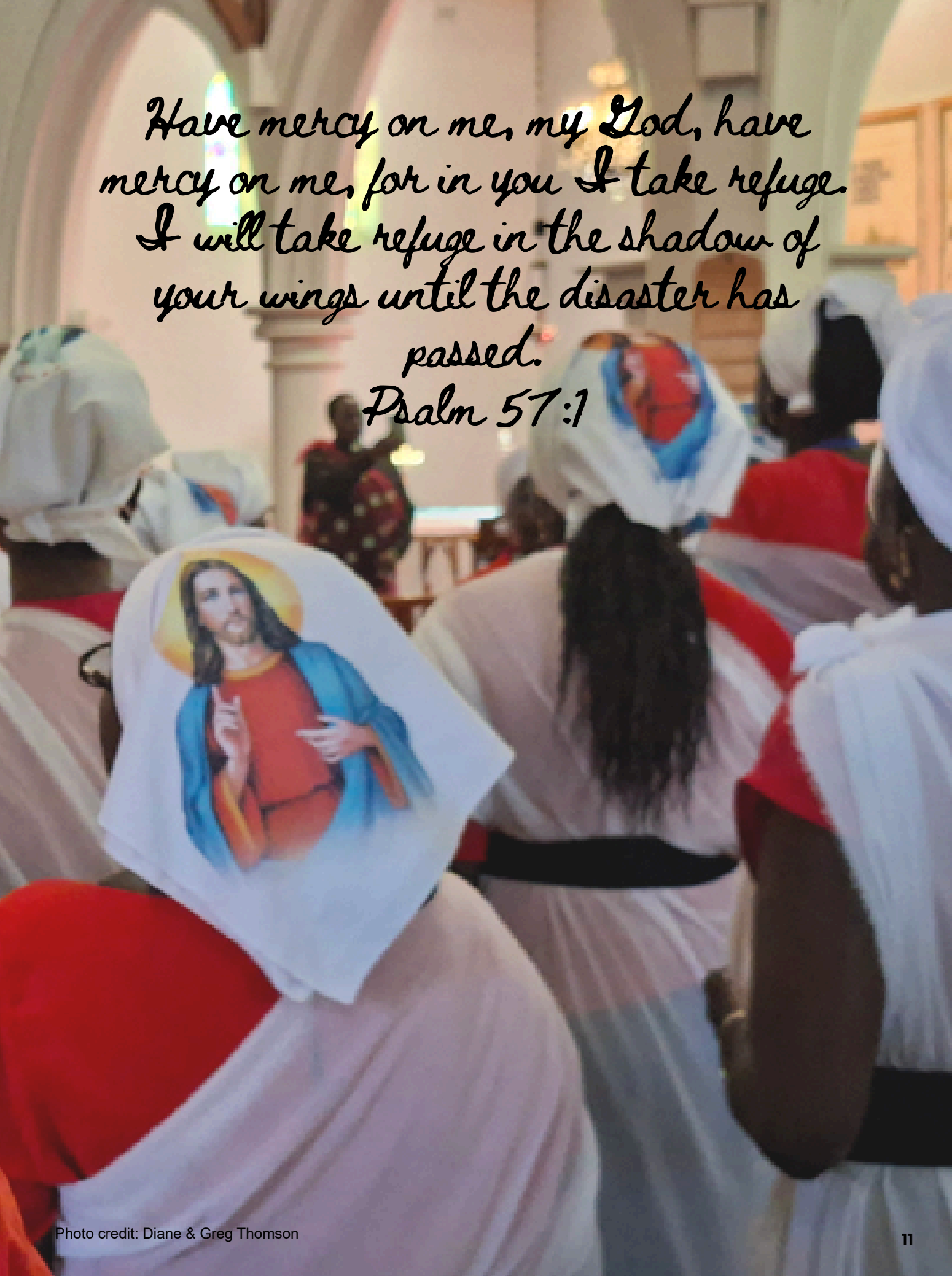
You will not be like a person who is forgiven a debt of \$100,000, and then goes and insists that someone pays him back \$5 (see Matthew 18:21-35).

If you truly understand the mercy of the cross, you will love to show mercy.

Christine Jensen
PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY
COORDINATOR



*Have mercy on me, my God, have
mercy on me, for in you I take refuge.
I will take refuge in the shadow of
your wings until the disaster has
passed.
Psalm 57:1*



THINKING OF SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan has a population of over 13 million, half of which is under eighteen years of age. Christianity, Indigenous faiths and the followers of Islam are present across different communities. The world's youngest country (independence in 2011) has been heavily impacted by ongoing civil conflict. Hundreds of thousands are either internally displaced within South Sudan or have fled to seek shelter in neighbouring countries.

The effect of the war has been economically devastating, and South Sudan is now one of the poorest countries in the world. The resulting widespread poverty causes families to face immense challenges.

Despite this, Mothers' Union in South Sudan, with 53 000 members, has been at the forefront of efforts to provide both immediate emergency relief, and long-term developmental programs to bring back hope to families and communities. Members play a vital role in: providing emergency relief; peacebuilding; trauma support; providing vocational, literacy and financial training; orphan and widow care; sustainable farming; legal advocacy for women's rights; and promoting gender equality and women's leadership.

In April this year, South Sudanese Mothers Union members from all over Australia (Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra, Wollongong, Sydney and South East Queensland), gathered in Ipswich for a weekend of celebratory worship, fellowship, support and encouragement for the work they do with families in communities. A special welcome was given by Diocesan President, Jenny Bullock, and President of St Paul's branch, Leanne Ferguson. On Saturday afternoon, a special time of remembrance and thanksgiving was held for the late Bishop Nathaniel Garang Anyieth who was instrumental in greatly encouraging the women of South Sudan to form Mothers Union branches.

The South Sudanese women chose to wear red and white to symbolise the blood that has been shed in conflict in their nation, and white to symbolise the hope that they have in that conflict being washed away, and the people being able to live in peace and harmony.

Let us stand with our members in, and from, South Sudan, and pray for the peace and the well-being of all.

Diane Thomson

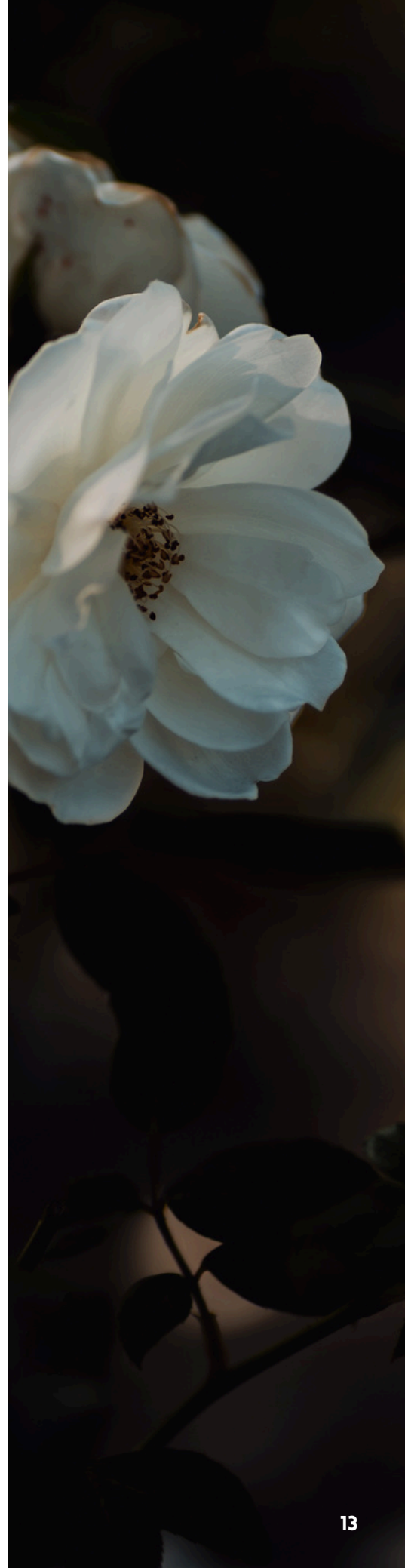
OVERSEAS AND NORTHERN OUTREACH
COORDINATOR



Photo credit: Diane & Greg Thomson

GOD. THE STATISTICS ARE AN ANTHEM OF OUR BROKENNESS. THEY REMIND US THAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IS AFFECTING FAR TOO MANY OF US. BEHIND EVERY NUMBER IS A REAL PERSON. THIS VIOLENCE IS NOT NORMAL. IT'S NOT OK. IN YOUR MERCY, ATTEND TO THOSE IN CRISIS NOW. LORD, BE MINDFUL OF THEIR NEEDS. STRENGTHEN THOSE WHO RESPOND TO THEM IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. AND HELP US ALL TO THINK WISELY AND CLEARLY ON THIS ISSUE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. AMEN.

(WRITTEN BY REV'D TRACY LAUERSEN, DV AWARE SUNDAY 2026)



SHOWING GOD'S MERCY

A number of years ago the international theme for Mothers Union was 'Walking in Mary Sumner's footsteps'. We were called to live out Mary's belief in the vocation to prayer and the call to social action that flowed from it.

During her life, Mary did much to promote marriage and family life, including compiling a book of some of her addresses, entitled "Home Life: Addresses to members of Mothers' Union". Part of the opening quotes to her essay to husbands reads:

"Marriage is the most important event in human life between the cradle and the grave. In most cases it either makes or mars, and renders the future either a paradise or a purgatory."

As at the time of writing, some 105-150 years ago, statistics on family and domestic violence today confirm that marriage and relationships are not always paradise, that people, particularly women and children, are marred by their experiences at the hands of those who carry out acts of abuse.

Into this environment we, as a mission agency of the Anglican Church, are called into prayer and action. And, as we show God's mercy, as we encourage families through faith in action, our actions will indeed be a prayer.

We can show God's mercy by fulfilling our mission to share Jesus' love

We can show God's mercy by fulfilling our mission to bring hope

We can show God's mercy by fulfilling our mission to advocate for justice and peace

In the promotional material for DV Aware Sunday this year, it was stated that:

"Churches have a role in education about domestic violence and an influential platform to do so.

Churches have a role in supporting people impacted by domestic violence, and a caring community in which to provide it.

Churches have a role in supporting our nation as it seeks to undo centuries of disadvantage and prevent violence in one generation."

(DV Aware Sunday Parish Resource Kit)

Mothers Union cannot separate itself out from the church. So let us be willing to show concern for others in their suffering. Let us be willing to be educated and to educate about family and domestic violence, even though it is a hard and uncomfortable subject. Let us be willing to be a part of the conversation in our branches, our parishes, our wider communities. Let us join with others in declaring that violence is not okay, in any form, in any circumstance.

Let us pray:

Merciful God, we humbly admit that we need your help. Grant us, by your grace and Spirit, to live a kinder, more peaceful, more godly life. To be more like you, Lord Jesus In what we think, what we say and what we do. Help us to be the change that this world needs to end the violence in our generation. Amen

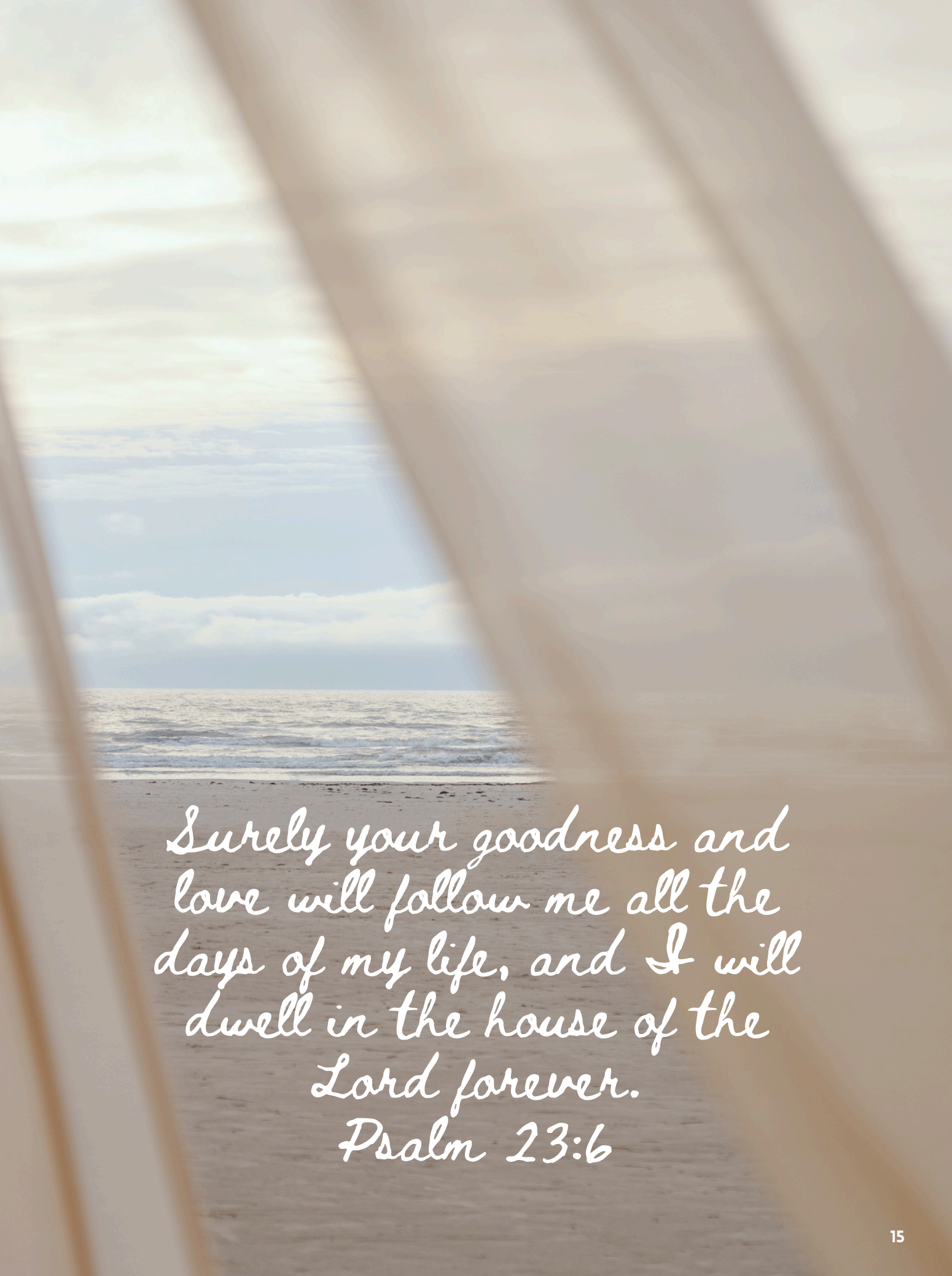
(Rev'd Tracy Lauersen)

Blessings

Wendy Mabey

VICE PRESIDENT (DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE)





*Surely your goodness and
love will follow me all the
days of my life, and I will
dwell in the house of the
Lord forever.*

Psalm 23:6

PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

In this 150th celebration year, I thought of Mary Sumner, and her legacy to us all. In short, she formed MU branches in such a way that showed women were relevant and capable in a man's world. To provide something that was not being met within the existing social system. To nurture and support each other and their families in faith, prayer, and good deeds.

Today, women work, spend a great deal of time ferrying the children around to different events in their lives, and can tap into an incredible network of support groups. What do we offer that is different to what is already available? How can we be attractive to someone with a busy life, when one thing has to be dropped to fit in another? What sets us apart from other groups and organisations?

It is by communicating our relevance in our society. Being actively involved in the Social Issues around us. To be visible in the projects that we support. Sharing our faith, commitment, and values, the power of prayer and the hope that is the cornerstone of our belief. Mary Sumner created our legacy by tapping into what was needed in her society. To grow that legacy, we need to tap into what is needed in ours.

We know this is what we need to do, but how do we do it? We can start by talking about MU in the connections and discussions we have; we should promote what we do, and what we support at every opportunity.

Working closely with Kaylene, our website administrator, I have become much more familiar with our website. I must be honest and admit I hadn't spent much time clicking through the all the links before. Promoting our website is an excellent way of letting people know about Mothers Union, what we do, and what we offer.

Have you investigated the website? Have you thought of how you can use it to promote and communicate who we are, what MU is? We encourage you to explore our website and our offerings available online.

Kären Hayden
PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION
COORDINATOR



ARTICLE BY KRISTI DAY



Mid-year often brings a natural pause — a moment to notice what has been unfolding quietly around us. For Mothers Union, 2026 is especially meaningful as we join with members across the world to celebrate 150 years of prayer, service, and commitment to strengthening family life. It's a reminder that our work today is part of a long, steady tradition of responding to the needs of communities with compassion and courage.

The theme for this issue, mercy, offers a gentle way to reflect on that legacy. Not as something dramatic, but as the everyday posture that shapes how we engage with the world. Mercy is present when we make space for new people in our branches, when we listen without rushing, and when we offer encouragement to someone who needs it. These small acts help our movement remain welcoming and connected.

Across many parishes, MU's presence continues to be felt in simple but meaningful ways. A conversation after church, a quiet offer of support, or a practical gesture at just the right time can make a real difference. These moments help people see MU not only as a group within the parish, but as a steady part of its life.

Our work with families also continues to take shape in different forms. Parenting support — whether through structured programs, informal gatherings, or simply being available when someone needs guidance — remains one of the most practical ways we can strengthen communities. Even small initiatives can offer reassurance to parents navigating the pressures of modern family life.

And woven through all of this is MU's ongoing attention to the social issues affecting families. Whether it's the rising cost of living, the pressures on mental health, or concerns about safety and wellbeing, MU has always held space for these conversations. Offering a compassionate, thoughtful voice — even quietly — is part of our calling.

As we continue through this milestone year, may we recognise the gentle strength of our shared work. Mercy may be the theme of this issue, but it also reflects the spirit in which MU has served for 150 years — faithfully, attentively, and with a hope that continues to grow.

Kristi Day

SOCIAL ISSUES AND ACTION COORDINATOR



MERCY SHIPS

By Elizabeth Nightingale

“We follow the 2,000 year old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the world’s forgotten poor.”

This mission statement is plastered across countless Mercy Ship webpages, heard in videos documenting incredible medical transformations, and lived out on the coasts of sub-Saharan Africa. Along those coasts, Mercy Ships provide free surgeries, dental care and medical training to people who would otherwise be without, while proclaiming the love of Christ to the nations they partner with.

This past summer, I was blessed to volunteer with Mercy Ships on the Global Mercy, in Sierra Leone. During my 5-week service, I worked with a team of fellow volunteers to run a summer holiday program for children who call the Global Mercy home. Together, we brought interactive, engaging and often dramatic Bible stories, sang songs of praise, danced, cooked, taught ukulele, ran hapkido classes, and had so much fun getting to know and encourage the kids we were there to serve.

Cont'd.

Beyond my role in the Mercy Ships Academy, I was able to visit with patients in the hospital wards (located on Deck 3 and 4 of the Global Mercy), and in the Hope Centre (off-ship in Freetown, where patients stay pre-surgery). There, I got to meet the people who had come from all across Sierra Leone to receive surgery, and had the opportunity to hear their stories, pray with them and sing with them ('Tell Papa God Tenki' being a favourite). I was in awe of the faith, resilience and beauty in the people that I met.

One of the most memorable blessings was volunteering with various Mercy Ministries. When Mercy Ships completes a field service in a country, they also partner with local churches, orphanages, women's centres, prisons and the like, to share the hope of the Gospel with people in the community. I spent time at Divine Heritage Home, an orphanage run by local Mercy Ships crew, and Cheshire Home, a local disability home, so now I have friends on the other side of the world that I get to keep in my prayers.

Overall, serving with Mercy Ships was an incredible time of having my faith both challenged and encouraged by a country, a mission, a people and a community of believers who answered the call to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Link to mission statement:

<https://www.mercyships.org/our-mission/>

Photo credit: Elizabeth Nightingale



A TOUGH MIND AND A TENDER HEART: PETER, PAUL, SOPHIA AND THE SOUL OF THE CHURCH

A sermon delivered on 21 June to the parishes of St Paul's Manly and St Peter's Wynnum to celebrate jointly our patronal festivals and 150 years of Mothers Union.



On the evening of 29 August, 1959 in Montgomery, Alabama, The Reverend Dr Martin Luther King Jr preached, "Life at its best is a creative synthesis of opposites in fruitful harmony." His sermon was entitled "A Tough Mind and A Tender Heart".

Dr King understood something profound about both human nature and the Gospel. Strength alone is not enough. Gentleness alone is not enough. The strong man who cannot love becomes a tyrant; the loving soul who cannot stand firm becomes ineffective. Life at its best, he said, is a creative synthesis of opposites.

Perhaps that's why Jesus sent his disciples into the world with what appears to be a paradox: "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

The Christian life is not lived in one dimension. It's lived in the fruitful tension of seemingly opposing yet complementary gifts. And what is true of the individual is true also of the Church.

Today, as we celebrate Saints Peter and Paul, and as we give thanks for 150 years of Mothers' Union, we are invited to reflect on a profound truth: the Church flourishes when it embraces the fullness of God's gifts – what some might call the masculine and feminine energies of the spiritual life. These are not simply gender categories of men and women. They are archetypal dimensions of human flourishing, present in every soul and necessary for every community. The masculine energy is traditionally characterised as the energy that builds, protects, ventures, and proclaims. It's the energy that asks, "What must be done?" It seeks truth, establishes order, bears responsibility, and pushes beyond horizons.

Cont'd.

In Peter and Paul, we see this energy magnificently expressed.

Peter is the rock. He stands for steadfastness, courage and fidelity. He is the guardian of continuity, the shepherd who protects the flock when storms arise.

Paul is the pioneer. He stands for vision, intellect and transformation. He crosses frontiers, challenges complacency, and imagines a future that others cannot yet see.

Together they embody the apostolic impulse of Christianity: the courage to stand firm and the courage to move forward.

Without Peter, the Church loses its foundation.

Without Paul, the Church loses its mission.

Yet there is another energy equally essential to the life of God's people.

In the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scripture she appears as Sophia, Holy Wisdom.

Sophia does not command armies or establish institutions. She calls. She invites. She nurtures. She teaches. She gathers scattered lives into communion.

While the masculine impulse often asks, "What shall we build?", Wisdom asks, "What kind of people shall we become?" While Peter builds the Church and Paul extends its reach, Sophia forms its soul.

She is the tenderness that keeps strength from becoming domination. She is the compassion that keeps truth from becoming cruelty. She is the beauty that reminds power of its purpose.

he great tragedy of every age is that these energies are separated, seen as distinct and even competing forces. Strength forgets tenderness. Truth forgets mercy. Action forgets contemplation. Institutions forget people.

The great vocation of the Church is to hold them together, in unity, in love – for the purpose of our collective prosperity, spiritually and materially.

For one hundred and fifty years, Mothers Union has helped the Anglican Communion do precisely that.

Mary Sumner and her fellow founders understood something that modern society often forgets: that the deepest transformations are not always achieved through power, but through nurture; not through conquest, but through faithfulness; not through noise, but through prayer.

Across generations, Mothers Union members have embodied Sophia's ministry. They have sustained family life, strengthened communities, comforted the lonely, advocated for the vulnerable, raised children in faith, and quietly woven together the fabric of parish life and Christian society.

History books often remember the builders of institutions and the makers of great speeches. Heaven, I suspect, also and equally remembers those who prayed, visited, encouraged, taught, listened, and loved.

MothersUnion stands within that holy tradition.

And perhaps that's why this celebration feels so whole.

For Peter and Paul remind us that the Church must be courageous. Mothers' Union reminds us why courage matters.

Peter and Paul remind us that the Church must proclaim truth.

Mothers Union reminds us that truth must be spoken in love.

Peter and Paul remind us that the Church must go out into the world.

Mothers Union reminds us that every mission ultimately seeks the healing of human lives and relationships.

The Church needs Peter.

The Church needs Paul.

The Church needs Sophia.

Cont'd.

As Dr King said, the Church needs both a tough mind and a tender heart.

Our world today desperately needs this life-giving synthesis. We live amid polarisation, disintegration, and fragmentation. Too often we are told to choose between strength or compassion, conviction or kindness, sacrament or service, left or right, Catholic or Protestant, straight or gay, conservative or progressive.

The Gospel refuses such false dichotomies.

In Christ, strength and tenderness meet. Justice and mercy embrace. Truth and love are one.

And so, the calling before us is not merely to admire Peter, Paul, and Mothers Union from afar, but to embody what they have always exemplified.

To be courageous enough to stand for resurrection hope.

Wise enough to discern God's purposes.

Tender enough to love those entrusted to our care.

Strong enough to carry love into a conflicted world.

To be the light when darkness feels like its closing in on every side.

May God grant us Peter's faithfulness.

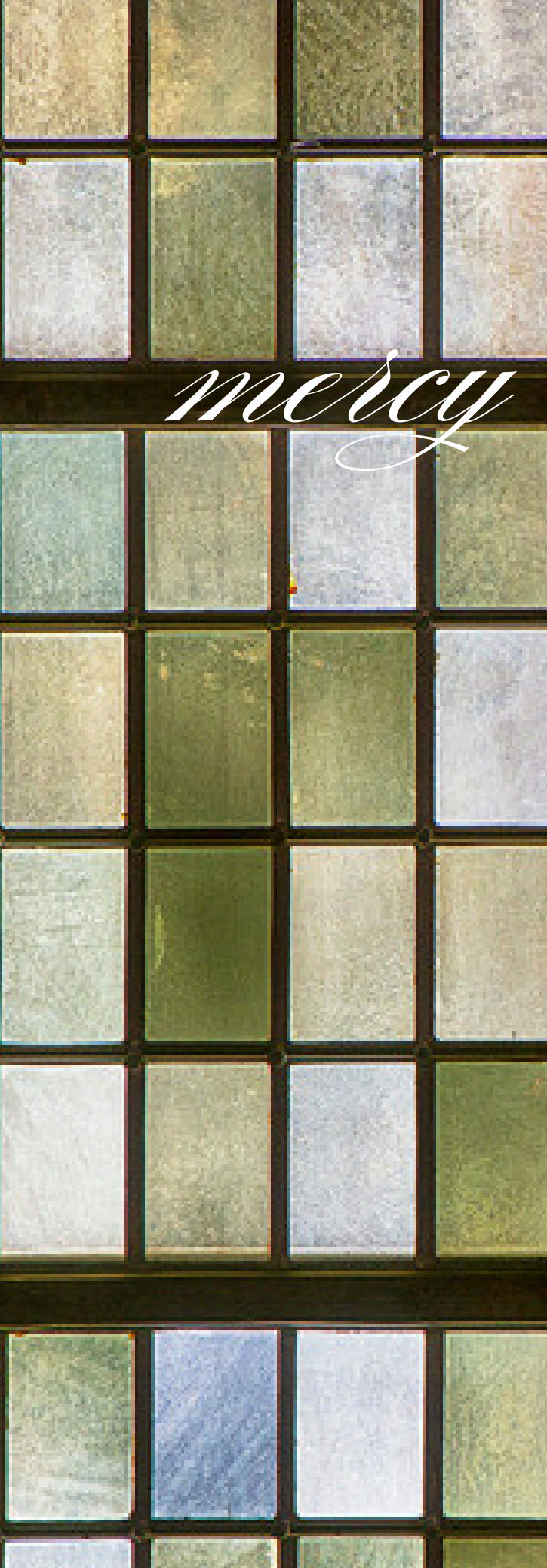
May God grant us Paul's vision.

May God grant us Sophia's wisdom.

And may our parishes, in their life and witness, become ever more fully what the Church is called to be: a living synthesis of strength and tenderness, mission and nurture, truth and love; wise as serpents, innocent as doves, with a tough mind and a tender heart. A fruitful harmony of opposites. Amen.

Fr Daniel Hobbs

Fr Dan is an Anglican Priest and Professed Franciscan. A member of Mothers Union since 2017 (Cleveland Branch), Fr Dan has served in the East Redland and Manly parishes and is presently a biocational priest serving in both an ordained ministry (St John's Cathedral and St Peter's Wynnum) in the Brisbane Diocese and a secular role as Partner and Associate Director at Brisbane government and media relations firm The SAS Group where he heads up SAS Impact, a division of the business specialising in social impact in the care economy.



Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. – James 1:17

mercy

This statement is challenging, particularly when your toddler is screaming for milk, throwing a tantrum, and overstimulating not only the parents but the dogs too. In the midst of the chaos, it can be hard to remember that even these overwhelming moments are blessings graciously given by God. When the marriage feels trying and the nights grow long and silent, it can seem as though everything around you is beginning to fracture. All good things come from the Lord, right? Isn't that an easy premise? A simple statement that could be found on a greeting card at the local Koorong. Reality relishes the opportunity to shatter the stained-glass window.

How can you possibly minister to someone who is staring down the barrel of a total marital collapse? No faith in sight, no positive outlook, and the envy of your 'successful' marriage gnawing at their bones. How can you look them in the eye and say, "Every good thing comes from God?" As a Christian family, supporting couples or families that are falling apart can be complex. Marriage brings an immense number of challenges, each unique in its own way. Yet without true guidance, often found in Scripture, it is easy to lose sight of what is good and perfect and the true gift that marriage is. Separation and the breakdown of families are so prevalent in today's society that it can feel as though a marriage lasting sixty-plus years is now a rare commodity.

Cont'd.

The Bible presents a clear framework for preserving marriage and seeing it blossom. Many churches present this framework as a triangle, where both you and your spouse are striving towards God and in that shared striving, your marriage slowly fuses together. Of course, while this is a sound framework, it can also be difficult in practice, especially for those who do not share the same values or beliefs as many Christians. What is the solution? James writes it perfectly.

...because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. – James 2:13

Minister through mercy.

Jesus was the perfect example of mercy. The true adjudicator of our sins was merciful. When the toddler is screaming, the spouse is being unreasonably difficult, and the dog is licking your ankles. Remember mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgement. Mercy is listening before correcting, praying before criticising, forgiving before withdrawing. We can't fix every fracture, but, as Jesus did, we can meet in the middle of the brokenness with mercy, rather than judgement.

by Hannah and Lleyton Waters



The Waters Family

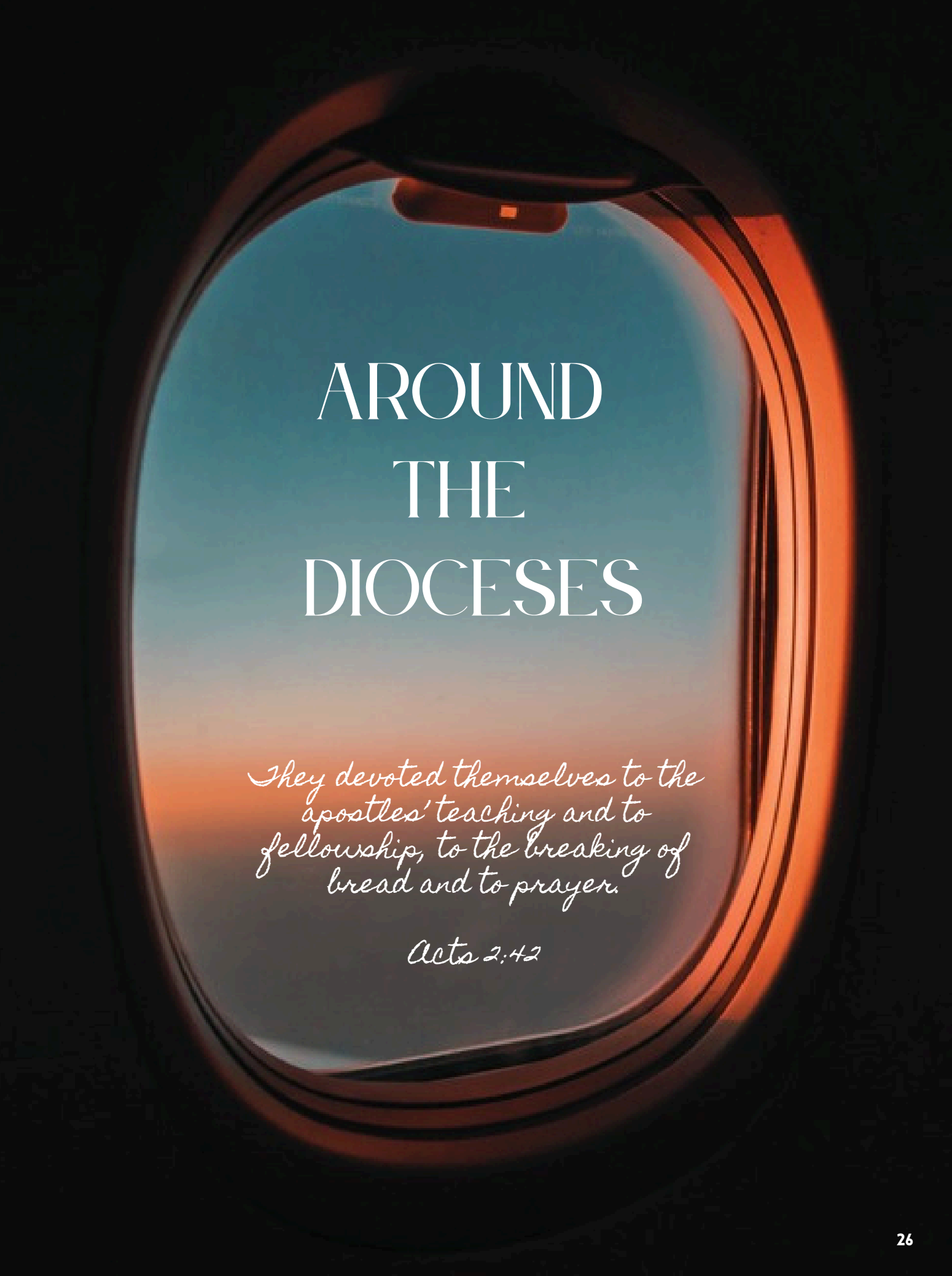
Lovingly Imperfect
By Renae Payne

The cake that sank
into gooey deliciousness,
the picture of the three-legged cat,

the shrub pruned haphazardly
into beautiful blooms,
the hairstyle hidden under my hat,

the shy ballerina
drawing our thunderous applause,
the brightly wrapped gift,
reveals something I didn't... quite...
expect....

It is the essence of motherhood
to embrace,
the delightful surprises,
the lovingly imperfect.



AROUND THE DIOCESES

*They devoted themselves to the
apostles' teaching and to
fellowship, to the breaking of
bread and to prayer.*

Acts 2:42

MU CALOUNDRA BRANCH

On Tuesday 9th June 2026, MU Caloundra Branch held a very special Service to acknowledge Avis Matheson's 60 years of service, commitment and dedication to Mothers' Union.

Avis and her husband Rod Matheson attended our Service, together with some of their family (son David, daughter Helen, grandson Alexander). We were so pleased Avis felt well enough to participate in this special occasion, as her health is now monitored on a day-to-day basis.

AMUA Diocesan President, Jenny Bullock, joined the MU Caloundra Branch for this recognition of dedication to the Mothers' Union, and presented Avis with her 60 year Badge and Scroll.

We were all privileged to hear the long list of achievements Avis has contributed to MU in our Diocese.

At this Service our Sunshine Coast Deanery President, Sue Milwright, admitted a new Branch Member, Pamela Large, with a warm welcome as she joins her Mother, Diana Large, as a Member of the Caloundra Branch of Mothers' Union.

Our Priest, Rev'd. Dr. Tom Hunton, celebrated the Eucharist and our musician, Anne Bowyer, accompanied us on the organ, with beautiful hymns including the Mothers' Union Hymn composed by R. Mowat.

Following our Service the Branch had Morning Tea, a brief Branch Meeting and then adjourned for lunch to celebrate the Mothers' Union Branch 46th anniversary in Caloundra.

Blessings,

Helene Baker-Daines

MU Caloundra Branch Secretary/Contact Person

Photos provided by Helene Baker-Daines





**MAY THE CALMING PEACE OF JESUS
GENTLY WASH YOUR FEARS AWAY.
MAY THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT
FILL YOUR LIFE WITH LOVE.
AND GOD'S HEALING GRACE POUR OVER YOU
WITH BLESSINGS FROM ABOVE.**

MARGARET SHOEMARK, STAFFORD ST PAUL'S BRANCH, UK

**SOURCED FROM THE "DEAR LORD" COLLECTION OF PRAYERS AND POEMS FROM MOTHERS UNION
MEMBERS ACROSS THE WORLD, FIRST EDITION.**

60 YEAR MEMBERSHIP BADGE PRESENTATION

On Thursday, February 12, some members of the St Stephen's Normanhurst Mothers Union Branch, gathered at a local cafe to present our beloved member, Norma Husking with her 60 year membership badge. Norma is no longer able to attend meetings due to family commitments. Norma first became a member when she was a young mother living in Tweed Heads NSW, and has loved all of her years in Mothers Union. She spent years helping in the Sydney office and of course in her local St Stephen's branch. It was with great pleasure that President Margaret Norris pinned the 60 year badge on Norma's jacket. Norma was resplendent in blue for the occasion, as that is her beloved Mothers Union colour, she said.

Margaret Norris

St Stephen's Normanhurst
MU Branch President



Photo credit: Margaret Norris



MOTHERS UNION TAKES OVER RADIO STATION!

Yes, it is true. In June, Mothers Union took over our local Christian radio station 1051LifeFM based in Bendigo. It was all part of our 150th Birthday celebrations and an opportunity to promote Mothers Union to our city. 1051LifeFM is primarily a music station that brings the good news of the Christian faith to both encourage believers and challenge listeners. The station characterises itself with the phrase 'Bendigo's positive choice'. The station is faith based and entirely listener supported. Further information can be found at www.life1051.org.au

Our Chaplain, Hannah, gathered responses from a survey using questions including 'What does your branch do to tackle injustice and help others?' Hannah used these responses to promote Mothers Union and its Bendigo branches. Additionally, Hannah interviewed members who described how they joined and why they stayed as members. Hannah introduced the music inviting us to play air-guitar too.

Our Treasurer, Peter, prepared nine conversations called 'Grandparenting Matters' based on a bible study booklet *Grandparenting – Loving your children's children* by Phyllis and Andrew Le Peau. A LifeGuide Bible Study published by InterVarsity Press. In recent years Mothers' Union Bendigo has been focussed on supporting grandmothers in the ministry to their adult children, their grandchildren and the great grandchildren. Practical topics such as praying for our grandchildren, favouritism and forgiveness were discussed. Working with Peter were Jennifer, our Diocesan President and Sarah. The nine sessions were broadcast once in the morning and again in the evening.

Our thanks to Jennifer for thoughtfully witnessing to her faith as a grandparent in both the responses and discussions. Huge thanks to Katie, Alida and Ray for welcoming us to the radio station and for sewing together the many recorded segments into the rich tapestry that was Mothers' Union take-over day.

Peter Dyke

AMUA Diocesan Treasurer/Secretary and Cathedral Branch Treasurer



Grandparenting Matters team: Left to Right: Peter Dyke, Diocesan Treasurer; Sarah Muling and Jennifer Devlin, Diocesan President.
Photo provided by Peter Dyke.



CENTRAL QUEENSLAND MU ACTIVITIES

As 2026 rushes pass, we thank God for his steadfast love and the wonderful group of people in CQ MU for their organisational skills, support, and prayer.

The Quiet Morning, led by our president, was a reflective time on the book of Ruth and its relevance to us today. It is always good to start the year being still in the presence of God. St James, Yeppoon offers a wonderful restful setting for this annual event.

As less and less members are travelling, All Saints North Rockhampton MU organised a re-run as a branch event in June.

The Lady Day service had us also welcoming 3 new members, including one male. We also honoured Bev for her 50 years of membership acknowledging that her husband Graham is her greatest support.

We did have an extra MU/GFS event as we hosted the 'Communities That Care' workshop with Rev Tracy Lauersen from the General Synod Families and Culture Commission. A challenging workshop well worth doing. Tracy was invited to preach the next day at St Paul's Cathedral

Our branches also had some great events, including the Candlelight vigil for Domestic Violence awareness month. It was a wonderful way of connecting with our community and other organisations grappling with this issue.

St Paul's branch president researched well and used the General Synod Family and Culture Commissions resources to create a very fitting service. Well done, Lynn. For me it was a delight to share in the litany based on the Lord's Prayer with my granddaughter.

2026 is racing ahead but we rejoice in our God who leads, guides and provides strength for each day.

Sue Witten
Diocesan President



Photos provided by Sue Witten

DALKEITH BRANCH

THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2026 MEETING

Reverend Peter Smith began our gathering with a beautiful Holy Communion service in the church. We then moved to the Church Hall for morning tea, warm fellowship, and a special celebration of Beris Carter's 90th birthday. We were delighted to welcome new visitors Judith Parnell, Rosemary Clay, Elizabeth Pratten, and Rose.

After a short business meeting, we had the privilege of hearing Reverend Peter Smith speak on Intergenerational Church. Drawing on research into declining church attendance in Australia, Peter highlighted the crisis facing the Gospel's growth, particularly among younger generations.

Intergenerational Ministry is the intentional and regular building of meaningful relationships across all age groups, rather than separating people into age-specific programs. The Bible strongly encourages this (Titus 2:1-2, Psalm 78:4), reminding us that passing on the faith is the shared responsibility of the whole church family — not just Sunday School teachers or youth workers.

All generations are precious and vital members of the Body of Christ. Children and young people need the wisdom, love, and example of older members to grow as faithful disciples. Likewise, older members are encouraged, refreshed, and inspired by the energy and faith of children and youth. While there is value in some age-specific gatherings, intergenerational ministry intentionally brings us together — teaching us that church is about "We", not "Me".

A Prayer for Intergenerational Unity

Gracious God, Thank you for calling us into your family, where every generation has a place and a purpose.

Help us to build genuine relationships across all ages, so that young and old may learn from one another and grow together in faith.

Give us hearts to pass on the Gospel with joy and humility, as we share our stories, our wisdom, and our love.

May your Holy Spirit unite us so deeply that our life together displays the reconciling power of Christ's cross — drawing us closer to you and to one another.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

by Jane Shepherd



Photo provided by Dalkeith Branch.

BLESSINGS BY THE SEA



Photo provided by Felicity Williams

At St. Brendan's by the Sea, in the diocese of Perth, we have just celebrated the most joyous Easter Day ever!

Following a deeply holy observance of Holy Week, it began with the Maundy Thursday Eucharist with a foot washing, followed by a moving Good Friday service, and then the 'Flowering of the Cross' on Holy Saturday. An ancient tradition but new to us. In just 30 minutes a bare wooden cross was transformed with greenery and flowers from our gardens, and then we danced! Yes, we danced around the church singing 'Lord of the Dance'. There was a real sense of awe and wonder, as we gazed upon the Cross that burst in beauty and colour.

That evening, after dark, the 'First Fire' of the Easter Vigil was lit and everyone received a candle which they lit from the Paschal Candle. The Easter Proclamation was sung by the priest before we all renewed our baptismal vows.

Easter morning saw a packed church, with wonderful music led by our own newly formed Sacred Sounds ensemble, and the baptism of two small children. One of the godmothers is an MU member and the children were each presented with a book from MU.

And then the finale! Late in the afternoon we gathered on Warnbro Beach to witness another baptism. This time it was a young man who had specially requested total immersion in the ocean, a first for our Rector as well. The sea breeze was strong and we watched the incoming tide slowly edge ever closer to the 'altar' set up on the sand. We said Evening Prayer and sang a hymn, and finally priest and candidate waded knee deep into the waves where he was immersed three times and baptised. 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Felicity Williams

YEPPOON BRANCH

On Sunday 21st June, Bishop Peter Grice was welcomed to St James the Fisherman Church, Yeppoon, QLD to preside over our two Sunday services. His address taken from Matthew 10:24-39 "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will acknowledge before my Father in heaven."

"whoever finds their life will lose it and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."

Bishop Peter prayed for MU Keppel branch. To celebrate 150 years of MU ministry, member Marzley presented the MU Intercessory Prayers and at morning tea, Marzley cut the cake to share with our friends. The cake was a collective effort; Marjorie gave a Lions cake and Lee was given a quick lesson about icing packs available these days.

Mothers Union members are united in prayer, across times, continents and cultures. We celebrate all that God has done and will do through faithful MU members.

Jan Robinson



Photos provided by Jan Robinson.

RED RIBBONS HONOUR LIVES LOST TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The month of May is recognised in Australia as Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. During May, St Mark's Anglican Church and St Mark's Mothers' Union Warwick, focused on encouraging the local community to become more aware of domestic and family violence within Warwick and the surrounding district. As part of the month's activities, everyone was invited to participate in a Red Ribbon Installation along the front fencing outside St Mark's Church.

A total of ninety red ribbons were tied to the fence to honour and remember those who have lost their lives due to DV. The Installation was blessed at a church service on Sunday, 3rd May, by The Venerable Lizzie Gaitskell. On Sunday, 17th May, a special service took place with a guest speaker from Anglicare Southern Queensland. Paul has worked for 22 years in Intervention Programs for men who have committed DFV. His address, "Not Your Usual Talk About Domestic Violence – We're in This Together" covered topics about building good relationships and positive role models within families. The entire community was invited to this service and to participate in the Red Ribbon Installation and to visit the Red Heart Prayer Corner inside St Mark's which was set up by St Mark's Mothers' Union members.

Elaine Stewart

President of St Mark's AMUA Warwick Branch



THE JOY OF ENOUGH

MOTHERS UNION SYDNEY ANNUAL SEMINAR 2026

On a wet Friday morning in February 2026, a large number of women gathered inside St Andrew's Cathedral for the annual Mothers Union Sydney Seminar. The topic this year was The Joy of Enough, which was far-reaching and relevant to all the women in the building and the many online watching from home or in their churches. We began the day in God's word with Amy Townsend unpacking Psalm 73, showing how Asaph journeys to contentment in God alone through the laments and learnings in the Psalm. It was wonderful to see how God wants us to call out to him with our heartfelt cries of lament, but he also wants us to learn to see with an eternal perspective and see how committed God is to us. We were reminded that God is good and that contentment isn't about what we have but who we have; we have God himself, as Psalm 73:25-26 states, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Next up, we heard from Tony Payne on the topic of Contentment in our families, and I was struck by the profound explanation about the opposite of contentment being covetousness, and that God had instructed his people in the Ten Commandments about the dangers of coveting their neighbour's house. And that the positive commandment of remembering the Sabbath was an instruction for us to rest in all that God gives. We were reminded that everything we have is from God, and that we can then have contentment with family and in our families, whatever our family looks like, because all that we have is from God. Tony warned of the dangers of family discontent in the productive-driven and consumerist society that we live in. He also warned us of the dangers of comparison and expectations within and amongst our families.

Cont'd.



Thank you to the hubs that joined the seminar remotely.
Photograph provided by Christine Jensen

I really enjoyed hearing from each of the speakers about the books that they would recommend, and it was wonderful to hear some more excellent book reviews from Jocelyn Loane. The bookshop on the day was very busy as many made purchases, and I'm sure women will continue thinking more about these issues. I was particularly interested in a book on Ecclesiastes called Everything is Never Enough by Bobby Jamieson and look forward to reading it sometime in the future. The final segment of the day, after a delicious morning tea, was a panel of women chaired by Harriet O'Connor and was a live recording for the Timeless Parenting podcast. The topic for the panel was Contentment when life is tough, and we heard from Kate Morris, Jess Habib, and Mary O'Brien about some of the things they have learnt about themselves and about God through some tough times. I was struck by Jess' comment that in weakness through illness, she became aware of her craving the approval of others rather than putting value in how God sees us.

All of them shared some wonderful truths about God being good, in control, and walking with us as our Shepherd, like in Psalm 23. The final word was from Mary, who reminded us all of the wonderful privilege it is to remember that we are all God's children, and that's the most precious truth. When tough times come, we can turn to our Christian community and ask for help. We're all sisters in Christ. I left the seminar with lots to think and discuss with those I came with and look forward to growing in contentment in the year ahead as I remember God's generous gift of life through His Son Jesus.

By Victoria Colgan



Photos provided by Christine Jensen.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

HELENE BAKER-DAINES
REV NICOLE BALDWIN
VICTORIA COLGAN
KRISTI DAY
PETER DYKE
KÄREN HAYDEN
FR DANIEL HOBBS
CHRISTINE JENSEN
WENDY MABEY
ELIZABETH NIGHTINGALE
MARGARET NORRIS
ELIZABETH PARKER
RENAE PAYNE
ROBIN RAY
JAN ROBINSON
JANE SHEPHERD
ELAINE STEWART
DIANE THOMSON
HANNAH AND LLEYTON
WATERS
FELICITY WILLIAMS
SUE WITTEN

*Thank you for reading
Mia Mia!*

ANYONE IS WELCOME TO
CONTRIBUTE TO MIA MIA.

I WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU,
WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN A
MEMBER FOR 60 YEARS, OR IF
YOU HAVE JUST BEEN
INTRODUCED TO MOTHERS
UNION FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO
CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE, A
STORY, A POEM, A PRAYER, OR
EVEN A RECIPE TO BE
FEATURED IN A FUTURE ISSUE.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR
FROM YOU!



The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger,
abounding in love.

He will not always accuse, nor will he
harbor his anger forever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the
earth,
so great is his love for those who fear
him;
as far as the east is from the west, so
far has he removed our transgressions
from us.

Psalm 103:8-12