



MOTHERS UNION NEWCASTLE

MARCH NEWSLETTER 2024

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



**Let the same mind be in you
that was in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 2:5

Mothers Union Diocesan Executive 2024

Elizabeth Bissaker, President

Barbara Warland, Vice President

Gail Iles, Vice President

Laurel Brook, Secretary

Jan Garrard, Treasurer

Reverend Nicole Baldwin, Chaplain

Departmental Coordinators

Denise Brown, Promotion

Noelene Lentfer,

Overseas and Northern Outreach/Links

Rhonda Morse, Prayer & Spirituality

Barb Hayes, Publications

Noeline Darcy, Social Issues & Action

Branch Liaison Contact

Noeline Darcy

Committee Members

Leonie Benson, Lone Members

Diane Kenchington, Magazines

Lynn Mulley, Newsletter Editor

Lyn Wickham, Coffee & Care

Denise Hird, New Born Baby Ministry

Beth Weeks, Birthday Cards

Kim Bussey, Website Administrator

Immediate Past President

Denise Brown

Life Members

Noelle Freeman & Robyn Southerden

The Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

*In Jesus' name. **Amen***

Our Vision:

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

Our Objectives:

- To promote and support marriage and family life.
- To encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children.
- To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.
- To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.
- To help those whose family life has met with adversity.

FROM OUR DIOCESAN PRESIDENT

Elizabeth Bissaker

**2024 Theme – Women of Purpose –
Philippians 2v5** – *‘Let the same
mind be in you that was in Christ
Jesus’.*

Welcome and blessings to you all.
We are now nearly a quarter of the
way through the year and I’m sure
you are all enjoying the programs
organised for your Branches for 2024.

This is an exciting year for Mothers

Union as we welcome our Worldwide President, Sheran Harper and Zone C Regional Development Coordinator, Jeanette Lawrence during May. Wednesday 22nd May has been set aside for us to meet Sheran and Jeanette at Baulkham Hills. When we have more details please think about joining other MU members for this day.

Our Australian President, Robin Ray would like us to focus on our endeavours to transform MU in 2024 by using the words Visibility, Articulation and Relevance to guide us on our current journey. Please read Robin’s letter that was forwarded to each Branch during January and maybe find time in your meeting to discuss openly.

I have been thinking about our theme and found a book “Promises for Women from God’s Word” on my bookshelf. This is filled with verses from throughout the bible and shows that we can rely on the scriptures for strength and comfort in our everyday lives. The scriptures show us how God promises to help us grow, to meet our needs and to quieten our fears.

Many of our Branches have participated in the Travelling Plaque instigated by Wyong Branch to celebrate 60 years of Mothers Union in Wyong in 2023. As the year of their celebrations came to a close it was decided that the formal passing around of the plaque would come to an end. If any Branches would still like to have their name on the plaque could you please contact me and I will make arrangements for the plaque to be engraved and then, if you like, I will bring it to your Branch meeting for viewing. There will still be the opportunity to have a photo and write a little about your branch to be included in the book.



***‘Let the
same
mind be
in you
that was
in Christ
Jesus’.***

Philippians 2:5

“What is
the “mind
of Christ”?

***It is a
selfless,
servant-
centered,
and
humble
and
obedient
mind.***

When all requests for inclusion are exhausted I will return the plaque to Wyong Branch. (Photos of Plaque and more info. on page 10)

Since the last newsletter we have enjoyed the Quiet Days at Cessnock and Bateau Bay. Thank you Rev'd Nicole for leading us in these times of quietness and reflection on the theme Women of Purpose. Some members attended Wyong Parish to hear about the work that Bishop Parker is doing in the Diocese of North West Australia. He especially acknowledged the support from Mothers Union for funding which assists with the conference for Clergy and their families where 36 adults, 33 children including speakers, children's programme staff and visiting seminar presenters attended.

I was able to join with Cessnock MU in November for the presentation of some Long Membership Awards totalling 238 years and induction of some new members. I also spoke on my life journey and was presented with a lovely African Violet which I'm happy to say is still alive and healthy.

Thank you to all who attended the AGM in November. Bishop Peter attended and spoke to us on our Theme for 2024. I hope that you have shared the Annual Report with the members in your Branches so that they are aware of what we are doing in our Diocese by being **visible, articulate and relevant**. These are the three key words, as mentioned earlier, from our Australian President who would like us to focus on in our endeavours to transform MU in 2024.

We thanked Lorraine Phillips for her time on Executive in a number of different positions over many years. Unfortunately she wasn't able to join us at the AGM. She says that she still has plenty of jobs and positions to keep her busy.

Jim and I were able to do a cruise to New Zealand at the end of November and especially enjoyed cruising around the Sounds and visiting Dunedin and Christchurch on the South Island. We missed seeing the South Island in 2011 as we were in Auckland when the Christchurch earthquake hit and our itinerary was changed. We also enjoyed a trip to the Australian Open Tennis in January.

I pray that 2024 will be a blessing to you all and I look forward to meeting up with as many of you as possible during the year whether it is a Diocesan, Anglican Women, Parish or Branch gathering.

May God bless you.

Elizabeth Bissaker
Diocesan President





CHAPLAINS CHATTER

Reverend Nicole Baldwin

Carrying Lenten disciplines into the year

Dear friends in Christ,

As I write this reflection, our journey through Lent, to the cross and the empty tomb has already begun. On Shrove Tuesday, many of us gathered with our families of faith to enjoy pancakes and prepare

ourselves for Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. We give things up that are not good for us and take up things that are good for us in Lent. Our Lenten intentions should help us to draw closer to God, to reflect on his presence in our lives, and to listen for his 'still small voice' guiding us. They are the changes that we need to make in our normal life so that our relationship with God can deepen and mature. On Ash Wednesday, we received ashes on our foreheads to remind us that we are dust and that we will return to dust. We are reminded to repent, to believe the Gospel, and to turn to Christ.

Often, once Lent is over and we have celebrated Christ's victory over the grave on Easter Sunday, the Lenten intentions that we have worked on keeping for the Season of Lent are put aside or forgotten. We take back up the things that we stopped doing for Lent, or we fall back into old ways and stop doing the new things we had begun.

I wonder what it might be like for us to continue our Lenten disciplines into the rest of the year, to carry them forward rather than putting them aside? If what we have chosen to stop doing or taken up draws us closer to God, would we not want to continue that intention and make it part of our new normal? Perhaps this is one way of continuing to grow closer to God's heart. It might mean that next year, we will need to commit to something new, something that we have not done before, rather than revisit our usual Lenten disciplines.

In this way we could be changed, we could be transformed and renewed for Christ.



We live in a world where change is coming faster all the time. We are expected, in many ways to keep up, and to live in a new normal. Perhaps we feel as though there is no choice but to move with the times. There are some things that it is good to leave behind, and in the same way, there are many things that are important to take with us into the future. Our faith in Christ, the hope that we have in his promise to love us, to guide us, to walk with us, and to bring us safely to heaven, are foundations on which we build our lives and our ministries. As we transform our lives, our families, and our communities, by shining forth God's love into our broken and divided world, we 'let the same mind' be in us 'that was in Christ Jesus.' That's what being women of purpose is about for us.

Because we are women of purpose, because we are people of purpose, God calls us to do something that helps shine his love into the world. We all have gifts and talents, given to us by God. When we share these with others, we share God's love. We have many gifts to offer others including our hospitality and creativity, a listening ear and pastoral heart, a willingness to hear about the journey of others and share our own. When we are true to who we are in Christ, we are more readily able to recognise the gifts God gives us and the ways in which they can be offered in service of others.

There is a deep and abiding need to care for ourselves and our own relationship with God. When we do this, we can accompany others on their journey as companions and friends on the way. We are encouraged by our theme this year to be women of purpose and to 'do something' to let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus. Perhaps offering our giftedness to others and nurturing our relationship with God in new and ongoing ways are some of the 'somethings' we can do?

Executive enjoyed a service of Holy Communion at St Luke's Millfield, followed by our meeting, and then a delightful lunch at The Central Millfield. (Rev Nicole)

Let us be the ones who stand up and say that we want to do something, remembering that God created us for this time and place in his story.

Prayerful love and blessings
Reverend Nicole



Christian Care for Families—Dr Robyn Ray

(Australian President of MU Australia)

January 2024



Dear fellow members of MU Australia

Welcome to another year of opportunities and fellowship as we seek to be both inwardly nurturing and outwardly focused active members of MU. I pray that 2024 will be a year of many blessings amidst few challenges as we seek through our MU work to be God's hands in today's world. This year brings special anticipation and excitement as we look forward to the visit of our Worldwide President Sheran Harper and our Zone C Regional Development Coordinator Jeanette Lawrence in May. I hope you will be able to meet Sheran and Jeanette at one of the locations (see Summer MIAMia).

During our worship time this morning, we read from St Paul's letter to the Colossians Chapter 1. It so aptly described my thoughts about you all as we begin a new year of hope and rejuvenation.

'...for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth the gospel...it has been bearing fruit among yourselves' (Col:3-6).

During my first year in the role of president I was able to visit several dioceses, listen to their stories and workshop ways forward that are possible and practical in each place. From these workshops three key words emerged:

- * **Visibility**
- * **Articulation**
- * **Relevance**

I propose that these three words be used to focus our endeavours to transform MU in 2024. These endeavours do not need to be major undertakings but rather (to quote your VP Parenting Elizabeth Parker), be 'one more good thing' to address each word.

Visibility

As recognised by your Executive last year, MU is largely invisible in our parishes and the community. During the year I discovered some examples where MU appeared in pew bulletins but with little recognition or relevance to the rest of notices. I visited one parish where they were having a celebration of the activities in that parish and although they have an active MU including diocesan office bearers, MU did not appear on any of the posters. I challenge you as I do myself to make sure MU is visible. At the conclusion of one workshop a member said: 'Oh so I can wear my MU shirt on other occasions that are not about MU'. What can you do in your context to increase the visibility of MU?

Articulation

While we participate in and support many projects, few people have any real idea of what MU does beyond having a monthly 'exclusive to MU service' with great morning tea. We need to share the MU message and the work of MU with others. May I suggest you spend a meeting this year developing short informative sentences that describe the real work of MU, thus inwardly nurturing your members with the skills to talk about MU. While fellowship is an important part of belonging to MU, it doesn't tell people much and can sound self-serving. Our Christian concern for families and the ways in which we achieve that will help us to tell a relevant and more engaging stories about MU. Who knows, your description and enthusiasm for MU may encourage others to become members.

Relevance

People in our parishes often see MU as irrelevant to the modern world. While we are expected to be 'in the world but not of the world' the work of MU will be more relevant if we use secular opportunities to put a faith perspective. For example, in the Lectionary for Anglican Church of Australia the fourth Sunday of Lent focuses on Refreshment Sunday - setting aside a time when fasting can be relaxed for the day. Many MU branches still hold to this Sunday as Mothering Sunday despite Mothering Sunday being an old English tradition and the lack of connection with the Lenten liturgy. If MU was prepared to move the celebration of Mothering Sunday to Mothers' Day in May (Simmel cake, flowers etc), we could make an important impact on the wider congregation and align the day with an emphasis on mothers especially as May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention month. We could also negotiate with the clergy to celebrate Fathers' Day in September, strengthening the importance of the fathering role.

There are other examples where MU can be more closely associated with activities in the community. As you consider opportunities to be more outwardly focused, please take some time this year to contemplate how your branch could make a small change in your activities to be more relevant.

I look forward to working with you all in this exciting year as we seek to live into the Objectives of MU in more dynamic ways, sharing our Christian faith through our work with families.

May God continue to bless all you do in his name through MU.

Warm regards

Robin

BE A WOMAN THAT WAKES UP WITH PURPOSE AND INTENT. BE THAT WOMAN THAT SHOWS UP AND NEVER GIVES UP. BE THAT WOMAN THAT BELIEVES ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE AND IS WILLING TO WORK FOR IT.



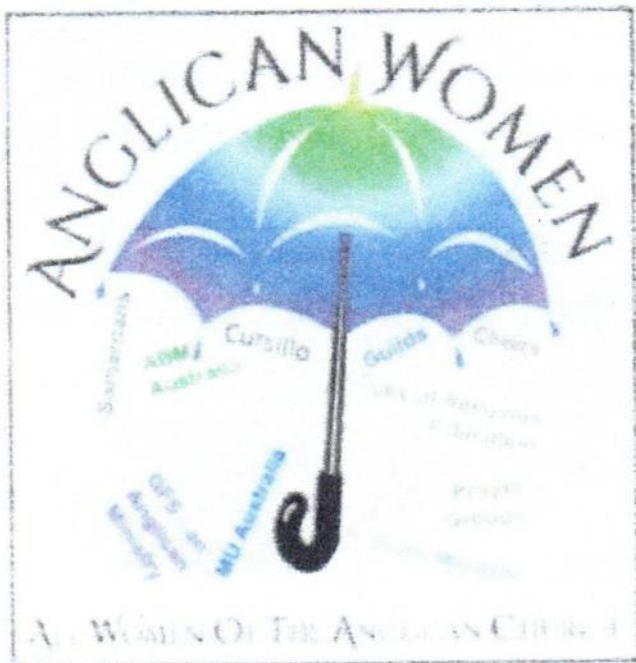
Spread the News!

**Our Worldwide President,
Mrs Sheran Harper,
is visiting Australia.**

You can meet with her at these locations;

- 13th May 2024 - Wollaston Theological College**
5 Wollaston Rd, Mount Claremont WA
- 18th May 2024 - St Francis Theological College**
29 Baroona Road, Milton QLD
- 22nd May 2024 - St Joseph's Retreat Centre**
33 Barina Downs Rd, Baulkham Hills NSW

Book a holiday near one of the venues today.
Let's share the liveliness of MU in Australia.
More details coming soon.



Anglican
Church Newcastle

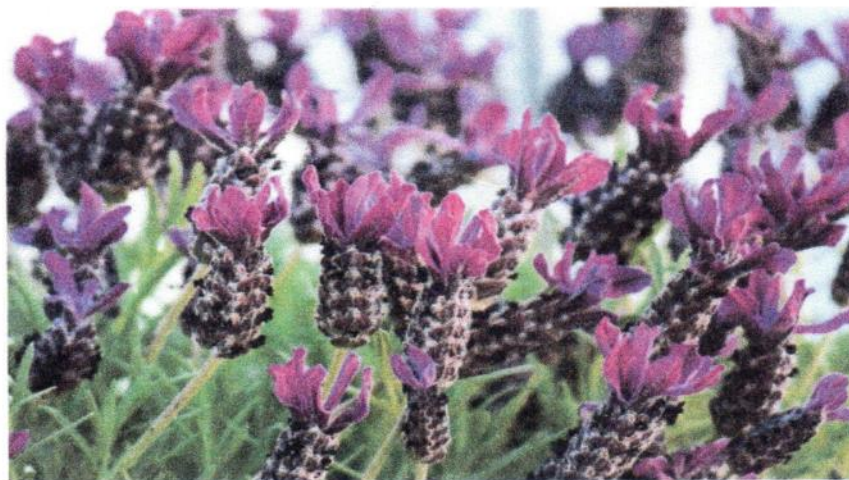
**Anglican Women
Diocesan
Quiet Day at the
Anglican Parish of
St John's, 45 Sturgeon St,
Raymond Terrace.**

Conducted by: The Rev'd Canon Stephen Niland

Date: Tuesday, 26th March, 2024

Time: 9:30am until 3:00pm

Please bring your own lunch



"Our flower this year is lavender which represents: silence, purity, devotion, serenity, grace, and calmness"

Theme: "What does the Lord require of you"

Sentence of Scripture: Micah 6:8

Enquiries to: Lorraine Phillips 0419 277 294

Marea Niland 0412 065 708

ALL WOMEN OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, FRIENDS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME.

Travelling plaque

If any MU Branch would like to be included on the plaque please contact Elizabeth Bissaker



so that the engraving can be done and maybe arrange a suitable time for a visit to your Branch with the plaque.

The Branches that have participated and have been engraved are:

Wyong

Newcastle Cathedral

Cardiff

Lakes (Gorokan)

Kincumber

Bateau Bay

Southlakes

Swansea

Belmont

Windale

Raymond Terrace

Boolaroo

Toronto

Cessnock

Singleton

Love & blessings

Elizabeth



'Building the Cathedral'

I once heard a parable about three bricklayers. A traveller came upon three men working. He asked the first man what he was doing and the man said he was laying bricks. He asked the second man the same question and he said he was putting up a wall. When he got to the third man and asked him what he was doing he said he was building a cathedral.

They were all doing the same thing.

The first man had a job.

The second man had a career.

The third man had a calling.

Do you look at what you do every day as a calling? It doesn't necessarily have to be the job of your dreams, but can you see the big picture in your daily actions? Do you realize what a difference you are making?

We may be laying bricks every day, but if we can envision the cathedral and move through our days with intention and passion, with vision and purpose, we are living our best life.



All of God's people are ordinary people who have been made extraordinary by the purpose He has given them.

I LOVE THIS ANALOGY.

When GOD wanted to create fish, HE spoke to the sea. When GOD wanted to create trees, HE spoke to the earth. But when GOD wanted to create man, HE turned to himself. Then, GOD said "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness."

If you take a fish out of water, it will die: and when you remove a tree from soil, it will also die. Likewise, when man is disconnected from GOD, he dies.

GOD is our natural environment. We were created to live in HIS presence. We have to be connected to HIM because it is only in HIM that life exists.

Let us stay connected to GOD.



YOU WERE CREATED ON PURPOSE FOR A PURPOSE.



A wonderful story shared by Susanna Denham from St Johns Raymond Terrace. (Sue and Don were on holidays when I emailed to ask her if she would share this story —thank you so much Sue. xo (I love this!) ☺)

Pancakes

"I'm not much of a cook. I'll happily leave meal prep to anyone who's willing to do it. Actually as I write this Don is cooking dinner for us in the van.

I certainly VERY rarely cook pancakes. However as Shrove Tuesday approached I was 'volunteered' to be a kitchen magician at St John's RT pancake night.

So, Sunday 11th, at the Supermarket, pushing my trolley loaded with bottles of pancake mix, a gentleman stopped me.

"Do you LIKE cooking pancakes? I LOVE pancakes, but my wife hates cooking them. I could eat 20 of those little ones."

I explained the reason for my purchases, asked was he local, (no) and issued an invitation. A long conversation followed.

After telling me that he and his wife had been travelling Australia in a motor home for 17 years, having retired and sold their house, he politely asked the whereabouts of the church. We went our separate ways.

Don patiently waiting near the check out, was incredulous at my story—mainly because I'd heard this stranger's (almost) life story, but had neglected to get his name. "He won't turn up", said I.

However, George and Sonya arrived right on time, fitted right in with our parishioners, had a lovely night, raved about the pancakes, thanked the cooks (Fr Steve, Marea, John and yours truly) and then helped pack up at the end, promising to drop in next time.

God moves in a mysterious way.

Susanna Denham



**I have a sign on wall near my computer that says:
THERE ARE NO STRANGERS HERE ONLY FRIENDS WE HAVE NOT MET.**



BABY BUNDLE BAGS

At the moment we are unable to purchase these bags. A friend of a Merewether MU member was making them for me, sadly passed away last year. I have been making them myself, however last year I used 100 bags so I am wondering if there may be some ladies who could help out by making a few bags. MU can reimburse any costs. They can be made from calico or any cotton fabric. The size is 49 cm in height and 46cm in width. The pocket on the outside holds a small teddy or toy and a card so proxy 20cm square. The purchased ones have a 6 cm gusset. I made mine

without the gusset just using an envelope corner to form a gusset. Bags any smaller than this are just not big enough to hold all the items. I would be very grateful for any help with these bags which go to John Hunter Hospital, Aboriginal Maternal Health and now also Maitland Hospital.

Denise Hird—New Born Ministry.

*Please
Join Us*

LADY DAY @ CATHEDRAL

10.30am—8th April

GUEST SPEAKER.

Dean Katherine Bowyer.



I don't get the purpose of an air filter—it just sits there and collects dust.

The AW Lenten Retreat

was held Friday 16th – Sunday 18th February at Catalina Conference Centre, Rathmines. There were 16 participants including 3 clergy which was encouraging. Bishop Charlie was the Retreat Conductor and his addresses which tied the AW Theme 'What does the Lord require of you' (Micah 6.8) with the story of Ruth were inspirational. In order to keep costs down the AW executive members catered. Lorraine Phillips



*Let all you do
be done in love*

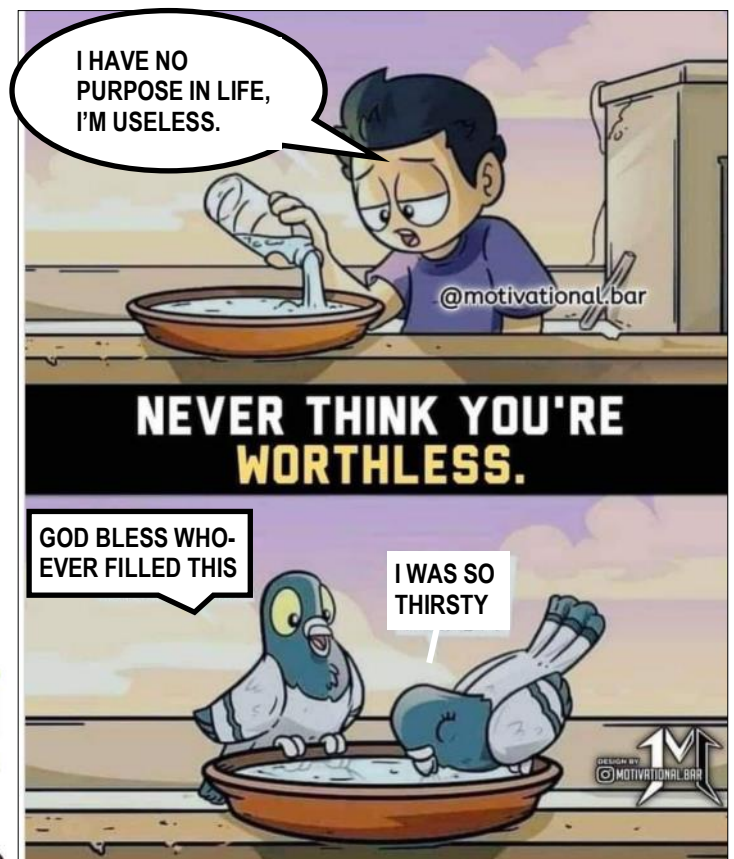


Let everything you do be done in

love. To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow. Let the resurrection joy lift us from loneliness and weakness and despair to strength and beauty and happiness.

**Love
Like
Jesus**

"Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."



If you ever think that you have no purpose in life.
Just remember, there is a guy at the BMW factory installing turn signals

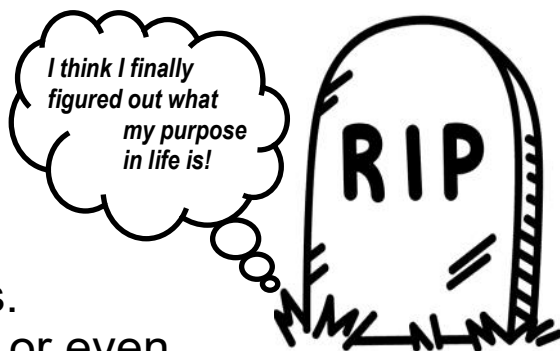


WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

What on Earth Am I here for?

"It's not about you. The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfilment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must **begin with God. You were born by his purpose and for his purpose.**"

"We were made by God and for God, and until we understand that, life will never make sense." Rick Warren



Life without **JESUS**

is like an

UNSHARPENED pencil

it has **no**

point



Whatever you do, do it all for the.....

Glory of God



Faith ✦ Hope ✦ Love

dates to Remember

AMUA NEWCASTLE DIARY DATES for 2024

March 26 th 31 st	AW Quiet Day Easter Day	9.30am Morning Tea	Raymond Terrace
April 8 th	Lady Day	10.30am Service	Cathedral
May 13 th 22 nd	Executive Meeting Sheran Harper Visit	9.30am TBA	Southlakes Baulkham Hills
June 11 th – 13 th 21 st	Wave of Prayer 2 nd Council Meeting	10am	Raymond Terrace
August 5 th 6 th 9 th 19 th	ONO Service ONO Service Mary Sumner Day Executive Meeting	9.30am Morning Tea 9.30am Morning Tea 9.30am	Cardiff Lakes Anglican Barb Warland's Home

Heavenly Father, thank you for creating me. Thank you for your love and protection throughout my life. Thank you for the family I come from and all the influences I have received in my life. I pray to you today that you show me my purpose on this earth. Show me the path that I have been destined to take. Lead me to know what I need to contribute to your kingdom. Make me aware of the talents you have hidden in me and let me explore them. Let me know my use and objectives in my life. I pray for guidance and direction. Let me not move with my own intentions and plans. I cannot succeed without your love and care. Grant me your grace and your favour to make the right choices. I know there are ways that may seem right to me but will end in disaster. Help me avoid those ways. Teach me to hear and listen to your voice. Teach me to obey your voice and your word. Lead me to your light and take me away from the darkness. Be my shepherd and keep me safe for all time. Amen.



SOMETIMES I THINK THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF MY LIFE IS SIMPLY TO SERVE AS A WARNING TO OTHERS!!!

He is risen


THE RESURRECTION

gives my life meaning
and direction and the
opportunity to start

over
no matter
what my
circumstances.



Alleluia

 DON'T MISS the DEADLINE

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER
20th May 2024**

Please send your Mothers Union News/Photos etc
to: **Lynn Mulley**

lynmulley@munewcastle.com

*I will acknowledge your email when received.
If no acknowledgement your email may have gone astray
so please contact me or re-send. **Thank you.***

WEBSITE: www:munewcastle.org.au