



MOTHERS UNION NEWCASTLE

NOVEMBER Newsletter 2025

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

FAITH



HOPE

[hōp] n. to look forward to
with confidence or expectation

[fāth] v. confidence or trust
in a person or thing: faith in
another's ability

LOVE

[luhv] n. the benevolent
affection of God for His
creatures, or the reverent
affection due from them to God

**Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters,
stand firm. Let nothing move you.
Always give yourselves fully to the work
of the Lord.**

Mothers Union Diocesan Executive 2025

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

Publications, position vacant

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
& Laurel Brook

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.



Elizabeth Bissaker President's Ponderings

Jim and I experienced the wonder of God's creation during September. We decided to go for a drive to Patonga as we knew that the Waratahs would be blooming in the bush. We were not expecting what we saw.

Many more than we had experienced in previous years as well as other wild flowers throughout the bush. Unfortunately this had only been possible with security cameras and notices all around to discourage people from picking the flowers.

This has led me to think on how are we protected as Christians? We don't need security cameras or alarms for us to be protected. We have a much greater protector as found in Deuteronomy 31:6 'Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.' May you all feel protected at this time.

Since the last newsletter we have had a busy few months in our Diocese and Branches with the 2nd Council Meeting, Wave of Prayer, State Conference, Overseas and Northern Outreach Luncheons, Mary Sumner Day, Anglican Women's Spring Celebrations, Women Celebrating Our Faith and Quiet Days.

Thank you to all who joined in the **State conference** at the end of July. Over 80 joined in on the day in five hubs around the Diocese. I know a few joined in either at home or visiting another MU branch outside our Diocese. Our special thanks need to go to Denise, Lyn and Leonie who starred in our Newcastle Diocese spot. Also thanks to our Rev'd Nicole for looking after the technical side of videoing our three 'stars'.



The Waratah—NSW Floral Emblem. For many Indigenous Australians, this flower carries deep spiritual meaning, symbolizing connection to the land and ancestral wisdom. It has also been used in traditional ceremonies and for medicinal purposes. During the Victorian era, the Waratah was seen as a symbol of love and admiration.



'He will not leave you or forsake you.'

Sydney Diocese MU stepped out in faith to put the Conference together in a way that encouraged many more members to participate in an unfamiliar way. The speakers they chose were exceptional and the discussion, singing and fellowship was enjoyed by over 500 members and friends on the day. It certainly seems to be the way to go at this time as technology showed us that we can get together and do it in all sorts of ways, even if hesitatingly at first.

Our Overseas and Northern Outreach Celebrations were once again well attended with Bishop Sonia our Presiding Bishop and Beth Ravenscroft, retired paediatrician as our guest speaker. Beth spoke passionately about her work in South Korea and how she assisted in setting up a hospital for women and children. Thank you to Cardiff and Bateau Bay Parishes and MU Branches for their hospitality over these 2 days.

Many Branches participated in **Mary Sumner Day** either at their Branch meeting or in their Church. We also enjoyed getting together for the **Wave of Prayer**. Please remember that we should make every effort to participate in our allotted time slot so that the 'wave' will continue unbroken.

Mothers Union was well represented at **Women Celebrating our Faith** at Nelson Bay in September. Once again Bishop Sonia joined us and took on the role as interviewer with our guest speaker, Rev'd Kimbalee Hodges from Singleton. It was interesting hearing about Kimbalee's early life and how she was led to Singleton Parish. In her talk she spoke on Hope – that Jesus offers hope to a world that's hurting. Kimbalee also kept us amused by her stories about the pigeons that reside at the Singleton church and rectory and that they now bring her comfort with their lovely cooing and she never feels alone.

Our Chaplain, Rev'd Nicole continues to support us in all we do including our O&NO Celebrations and Quiet Days and always ready to support any of our members in their time of need. We appreciate all that she does for MU especially as she also leads a very busy Parish at Cessnock.

As we go forward into 2026 may we all be encouraged by being members of Mothers Union Worldwide and the way that we, as a Diocese, can continue to pray and 'be specially concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life'.

Love and Blessings

Elizabeth



FAITH IS LOVE REACHING UPWARD

Chaplain's Chatter

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"



Dear friends in Christ,

I have been deeply honoured to be your Chaplain this year. And at the recent Mothers Union Australian Council, I also had the privilege of serving as Chaplain. The MU Australian theme, *"Inwardly nurturing to be outwardly focused"* provided a deep well of inspiration throughout our time together.

At our closing Communion service, one of the readings was Isaiah 6:1–8, where the prophet hears God's call: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah's response is both humble and courageous: "Here am I. Send me!"

Those words echo across time and circumstance. They are as much a question for us today as they were for Isaiah. Each of us, in our own way, is called to listen for God's voice, to be open to what God might be asking of us in our homes, our churches, and our communities.

When we hear Isaiah's story, it's easy to picture it as something distant or dramatic: a vision of heaven and angels, smoke and trembling thresholds. But beneath all that grandeur is something very human: one person encountering the holiness of God and realising just how small and fragile he is.

Isaiah doesn't begin by feeling confident or ready. In fact, he feels the opposite. Faced with God's glory, he says, "Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips." He feels unworthy, unsure, and overwhelmed. And yet, in that same moment, God reaches out in mercy. A seraph touches his lips with a burning coal — a symbol of cleansing and forgiveness — and says, "Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

That is such a beautiful truth. The God who calls us also cleanses and equips us. God doesn't wait for us to be perfect before we can be sent; instead, God meets us in our weakness and transforms it into willingness.

HOPE IS A SEED OF ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

Isaiah's story shows us something about the rhythm of Christian life, what we might call the rhythm of calling: encounter, cleansing, and sending. It begins when we encounter God, perhaps in prayer, in worship, or in the stillness of everyday life. It deepens when we recognise our need for God's grace. And it moves outward when, touched by that grace, we find the courage to serve others.

The message of Isaiah also speaks directly to our Mothers Union Newcastle theme: "*Empowered by faith, engaged in action.*" We come first to be nurtured, to be reminded of who we are in God's sight, to be strengthened in faith, to be renewed by prayer and fellowship. It is in that space of spiritual nurture that God touches and renews us, preparing us to serve.

Being *empowered by faith* is not about turning inward for comfort alone; it's about allowing God to shape our hearts so that we can respond with open hands and willing spirits. The time we spend with God, in worship, in prayer, in companionship with one another, becomes the wellspring from which our service flows.

And when we are sent, when we are *engaged in action*, whether that's to visit someone lonely, to comfort a neighbour, to serve in our parish, or simply to pray faithfully for others, we go not in our own strength but in God's.

Isaiah's "Here am I" is not the voice of someone who feels ready for the task ahead; it's the voice of someone who has been touched by grace. That's the kind of sending we know too, not a sending based on our ability, but on God's transforming love.

Every act of kindness, every prayer spoken in faith, every effort to love as Jesus loved begins here: at the altar of mercy, where God turns our unworthiness into willingness.

And still today, across the generations, the same question sounds in our hearts: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"



LOVE IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF OUR BEING.

May our answer, like Isaiah's, be filled with faith and gratitude, not because we are strong, but because we have been strengthened by the love of God who calls us.

"Here am I. Send me."

Prayerful love and blessings,
Reverend Nicole

**Gracious God,
you call us to draw near and be renewed by your
presence. Touch our hearts with your grace,
cleanse us with your mercy,
and send us out in love to serve you in the world.
May all we do be shaped by your Spirit and
guided by your peace. Amen.**

Congratulations !!!



**& THANK YOU
REV. NICOLE**

Please join me in congratulating Reverend Nicole on her appointment as our Chaplain for another three years and on her appointment as Area Dean of the Ministries in the Maitland and Cessnock LGA's. Please keep her in your prayers as she ministers amongst us. ~ Lynn Mulley ~

Anglican Parish of Cardiff-Boolaroo



Fantastic day with other women of many ages at **Women Celebrating Faith**. We had beautiful food and loving care from Hope Cottage, thought-provoking talks by Rev'd Kimbalee Hodges, and were blessed by everyone who helped pull the day together. Thank you from us all. Plus an added bonus.....one of us even won a comfort chicken in the lucky door prize!!



THE SHAPE OF TRUE LOVE ISN'T A DIAMOND. IT'S A CROSS. —Alicia Bruxvoort



ONO Bateau bay

Two wonderful and well attended ONO Celebrations were held on the 4th and 5th August at Cardiff Parish and Bateau Bay Parish.

75 Ladies were in attendance at Cardiff and 43 at Bateau Bay. Bishop Sonia was our Celebrant with Rev. Nicole assisting.

Our Guest Speaker on both occasions was Dr. Beth Ravenscroft. Beth spoke on her time as a missionary in South Korea and her involvement in establishing a medical training facility and hospital there. Beth now retired was a Paediatric Physician. Her talk was very enlightening and all in attendance enjoyed it very much.

Again I express my special thanks to Cardiff MU and Bateau Bay MU for hosting our celebrations. Your hospitality was greatly appreciated.

To Laurel and Denise also my thanks for their musical ministry to us.

We do not have a total of money raised at this time as money is still being received by Jan.

I wish to express my thanks to all for your support and encouragement.

Till next year. God Bless and Protect you.

Noelene Lentfer

Footnote: Cardiff had 75 attendees and Profit was \$1571.10 and 43 at Bateau Bay Profit \$524.60.

This was a great effort, well done all.





**Dr. Beth
Ravenscroft**



**ONO
CARDIFF**
Overseas &
Northern Outreach



Dear Lovely Mother's Union Community

I would like to express my gratitude for the wonderful experience of the O/NO Luncheon with service of the Word, meeting and special presentation at Bateau Bay on Tuesday.

I really enjoyed all aspects of this fellowship and would like to take this opportunity to share with you the prayer through which I received God's gift of grace and everlasting life on Christmas Day of 2016:

Prayer for Salvation ☐

I confess to God that I am a sinner.

I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins on the cross and was raised for my justification.

I receive and confess Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

May this prayer be a lifelong blessing and source of courage and strength to all who read it.

God's blessings and peace be with you all and I look forward to our next Mother's Union meeting.

Isabella (New member, Bateau Bay/The Entrance)

**GIVE YOUR
heart
TO JESUS**

The most important decision you can make in your entire life is accepting JESUS CHRIST as your Lord and Saviour.

Jenny Dacombe shared below poem with us at Exec. meeting in August. We thought it was good, and that you may like to share it in the Newsletter, The author is a friend of Jenny's. Cheers and love Laurel x (Thanks Laurel xo)



The Good Old Days by John Kerr

We met and we married, a long time ago,
We worked for long hours when wages were low.
No TV, no wireless, no bath—times were hard,
Just a cold water tap and 'a walk in the yard'.
No holiday abroad, no carpets on floors,
We had coal on the fire and we didn't lock doors.
Our children were safe going to play in the park,
Old folk could go for a walk in the dark
No valium or speed, no ICE or LSD,
We cured most of our ills with a cup of hot tea.
No vandals or muggings, there was nothing to rob,
We felt we were rich with a couple of bob.
People were happy in those far away days,
Kinder and caring in so many ways.
Milko's and paper boys would whistle and sing,
A trip to the pictures was our sole weekly fling.
We all got our share of trouble and strife,
We just had to face it, that's the pattern of life,
Now I'm alone and look back through the years,
I don't think of the bad times, troubles and tears!
I remember the blessings, our home and our love,
And that we shared them together,
I thank God above.

"I wish there had been a way to know you were in the good old days, before you actually left them."

Andy Bernard.

Sometimes you have to grow up before you fully appreciate how you grew up.



Photos from QUIET DAYS—23/24 October 2025. **SERVING OTHERS AND NURTURING OURSELVES.**

Below words are copied from the 2019 November Newsletter. Written by Denise Brown (President) (*In the good ol' days before Covid!*) ☺

Quote: "I just had a window pop up on my laptop which said '**Your battery is running low – you might want to plug your computer in**'. It made me think that if your battery is running low you might want to take some time out and attend a Quiet Day and recharge your spiritual battery."

PLEASE THINK ABOUT JOINING US for QUIET DAYS in 2026.





The Red Rose Foundation™ is a national not for profit charity who works to end domestic violence across our communities.



We are especially concerned at the high number of domestic violence related deaths that occur each year through homicide and suicide. We also acknowledge that tragically, many of these domestic violence related deaths have many predictive elements and are largely considered preventable. Our motto is Change The Ending. If you would like to join us, we are asking for local and state government and other community groups to paint one or more existing public benches red, arrange and pay for the cost of the metal plaque with the wording Domestic Violence: Lets Change The Ending. We request that the plaque includes dual logos: The Red Rose Foundation™ and the logo of your own organisation. The Red Bench is a wonderful way to bring the community together to take a stand by taking a seat. Send us your photos and we will feature them on social media. Also take a photo of yourself or others on the Red Bench, send us your short message and we will turn them into Conversation postcards. If you require any further information please contact Red Rose Foundation™. Ph: 04321 18248 (Betty Taylor)

Redbench@redrosefoundation.com.au www.redroTake A Seat To Take A Stand To End Domestic Violence The Red Rose Foundation™ launched the Red Bench Project™ in 2019 to build a permanent reminder that domestic violence occurs within all of our communities. The first red bench was unveiled on 15th May 2019 in Cleveland by Redlands Mayor Karen Williams. The presence of a Red Bench in a public location aims to raise awareness and provide an opportunity for this important issue to remain visible. A place to sit and have a conversation about how we as community can change the ending to domestic violence. The Red Bench in Cleveland was the first of over 300 red benches across Australia. Initially started as a partnership with local government, red benches are now being established by state government departments, businesses, sporting groups, schools, churches and various community groups.

Used with permission Red Rose Foundation. 19th May 2025

President Elizabeth touched on this Foundation in her report in June Newsletter and I received permission to share above but then did not have enough space so am sharing now. What a great idea!

THOUGH NO ONE CAN GO BACK AND MAKE A BRAND NEW START, ANYONE CAN START FROM NOW AND MAKE A BRAND NEW END. Carl



Social Issues and Action News September 2025 CLEAN AIR AND BLUE SKIES

The International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies is celebrated annually on 7 September. Strolling through the park this morning I was delighted by the scent of eucalyptus and lemon myrtle, wildflowers mingled with the earthy smells of surrounding farmlands, a whiff of woodsmoke from the neighbour's chimney and the heady perfume of early flowering jasmine growing on a fence. After a rather cool night, I enjoyed the warm sunshine and fresh air. I live in a small village on the outskirts of a large city. We don't have a great deal of air pollution except during bushfires, or when farmers are burning off, harvesting or ploughing fields. Air pollution is however, one of the biggest environmental health risks, and avoidable causes of death and disease globally. Tiny, invisible particles of pollution penetrate deep into our lungs, bloodstream and bodies and are responsible for about one-third of deaths from stroke and lung cancer, as well as one quarter of deaths from heart attack. It is a cause of asthma and chronic respiratory illnesses. Particularly in developing countries, air pollution disproportionately affects women, children and the elderly, especially in low-income populations as they are often exposed to high levels of indoor air pollution from cooking and heating with wood fuel and kerosene. Air pollution exacerbates climate change, causes economic losses, and reduces agricultural productivity. Poor air quality is a challenge in the sustainable development for all countries, but in particular in cities and urban areas in developing countries, with levels of air pollution higher than limits set out in the World Health Organization air quality guidelines. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development document entitled "The future we want," promotes sustainable development policies that support healthy air quality. What can we do? Call upon governments and corporations to adopt sustainable policies, and as individuals, be aware of actions we can take to reduce our contribution to air pollution. Small changes will help. Improve indoor air quality by ventilating your rooms, use approved wood heaters, grow house plants, and avoid smoking. Limit the use of your car, switch off instead of idling, and always re fuel after dusk. Avoid using polluting chemicals and dispose of waste thoughtfully. Climate Change must be taken seriously. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly. By tackling air pollution, we can secure healthy air for all. **Susan Skowronski Social Issues**

and Action Coordinator *May we always see the world through the eyes of Christ, speak to those we meet with the words of Christ, and take with us on our journey the peace of Christ* **Noeline**

**FAITH
IN ACTION**

awe & wonder

When was the last time you paused to ponder the wisdom woven through Creation?



'Climate Change must be taken seriously.'

Through the rhythm and flow of the seasons, the earth reminds us of deep truths: about ourselves, about our world, about our God. When we think about climate justice—and it's deeply important that we do—it's easy to start from a place of concern, or anxiety, even desperation. But what if instead, we first grounded ourselves in **wonder? May this be a time to marvel in God's incredible tapestry of life on earth.** It's also a time to remind ourselves of our sacred calling to care for and nurture this common home of ours. (From Season of Creation 2025)



This quilt (above) made by Glenda Boundy is exquisite. What a beautiful gift to a special lady. (Jane Conway)

you are special

Glenrock MU had the great pleasure in celebrating our wonderful member Blanche's 100th birthday in April with a special cake and a gift of a beautiful quilt made by one of our members.

Congratulations Blanche!

Last EXECUTIVE MEETING for the year was held @ STROUD. Afterwards we all enjoyed a beautiful lunch @ BILLY-T CAFÉ. What a lovely group of girls. xo

The voices of REASON.



FAITH makes things possible; **HOPE** makes them work; and **LOVE** makes them beautiful.

Anglican Women of Newcastle Annual Report 2025

It is with some regret that most of the executive including myself after serving seven years in the role of President will resign at the end of this year. We do not have Deanery contacts for Newcastle, Manning, Upper Hunter and Maitland deaneries. We also need people to be parish contacts so Deanery leaders have someone to pass on information from executive to parishes. I am not prepared to continue after the end of the year due to health and other commitments.

As I said last year, Anglican Women cannot go forward if we don't have an executive. It will be a great shame for Anglican women to have AW cease to exist because we can't get women to be on executive. We only hold meetings in February, May, August and November so it is not an onerous commitment but if we want to continue to be relevant in the diocese we need people to step up and fill positions.

It has been a pleasure to serve the women of the diocese as your president empowered by the Holy Spirit and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessings to you all

Lorraine Phillips
Diocesan President



So, this is my last Newsletter. Thanks to all who sent kind words of encouragement over the past few years. I've loved doing the Newsletter and have learnt so much. Many thanks to Denise for her help each time—I just could not have done it without her. Thanks 'nise. Xo

It's over to you now Gayleen, Thank you for offering to take over Newsletter—I hope you enjoy it all as much as I have. xo



God grant us FAITH and HOPE and LOVE

HOPE for a world
grown cynical cold.
Hungry for power
and greedy for gold

FAITH to believe
when within and without
There's a nameless fear
in a world of doubt.

LOVE that is bigger
than race or creed
To cover the world
and fulfil each need.

God grant these gifts
of **Faith, Hope and Love**
These things this world
has so little of,

For only these gifts
from our father above
Can turn mans sins
From hatred to love.

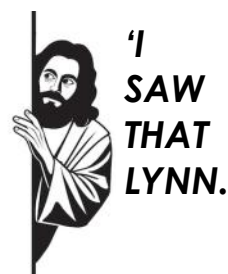
Helena Steiner Rice

Let go and let God take control.

MEMORIES.

Isabella's wonderful words on page 9 brought back so many memories for me.

I asked our Lord Jesus to come into my life at a Christian Girls Camp @ Tahlee Bible College when I was 12-13 years old. When the invitation was made everyone just sat in their seats. I so badly wanted to go down the front and accept Jesus as my Lord and Saviour but I was too scared of what others would think or say. I was there with my cousin and I was worried she would laugh at me. But suddenly I felt myself rising from my chair and walking down to the front like I had no control over my body. I was taken to a room and someone prayed with me and I asked the Lord to come into my life. Then I remember crying and crying and afterwards I felt *really* good (cleansed.) (And my cousin didn't laugh at me! ☺) I know Jesus has been with me, and guiding me since that time. Absolute miracles have happened in my life. I have made *many, many* mistakes but after confessing my mistakes know I am forgiven. (Forgiving myself sometimes has been hard) I daily try to love the Lord with all my heart, soul and mind. For me it's been a growth thing—I'm still growing! At the moment I'm in a GOoD place. The growth, by *learning & understanding more*, is one good thing about getting older. (The aches and pains are not so great! ☺)



I leave you with some of my favourite words (which I carry on a card with me always as a reminder) In part.....*'First, we must love the Creator. This is the greatest love we can have (although we may not know this until we meet Him.) Then we must love ourselves. I knew that without feelings of self-love that the love we feel for others is counterfeit. Then, we must love all others as ourselves. As we see the light of Christ in ourselves, we will see it in others too, and it will be impossible not to love that part of God in them.'*

(Betty J. Eadie—Embraced by the light) I've had above words for over 30 years.

i love you

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

Glory of God

Lynn



**Life is too short, the world is too big,
and God's love it too great to live ordinary. —Christine Caine**

DIARY DATE STILL TO COME 2025

November 21st	AGM Annual General Meeting	9.30 for 10am	Merewether
2026			
16th February	Executive Meeting	9.30 for 10am	Cessnock
MARCH 6th	WORLD DAY OF PRAYER		
13th March	First Council Meeting	9.30 for 10.00	New Lambton



*"May the gift of faith,
the blessing of hope,
and the peace of His love
be yours this Christmas."*

 **DON'T MISS the DEADLINE**

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER 19th February 2026

Please send your Mothers Union News/Photos etc
to: **Gayleen Bayliss**
email: **stjohnscottage@bigpond.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** ★