

150 YEARS OF
Mothers UNION
Join us, Join in

Lighting the way for
generations to come



**MOTHERS UNION
NEWCASTLE**



ANGLICAN
MOTHERS UNION
NEWCASTLE

Newsletter June 2026

"Serving others - Nurturing ourselves"

Luke 10.41-42



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

Mothers Union

Diocesan Executive 2026

Elizabeth Bissaker-President
Barbara Warland-Vice President
Gail Iles-Vice President
Laurel Brook-Secretary
Jan Garrard-Treasurer
Reverend Nicole Baldwin-Chaplain

Departmental Coordinators

Rev'd Kathy Trimble-Promotion/Publicity
Noelene Lentfer-Overseas & Northern
Outreach/Links
Rhonda Morse-Prayer & Spirituality
Denise Brown-Publications/Assistant
Secretary
Noeline Darcy-Social Issues & Actions

Committee Members

Jane Conway-Birthday Cards
Leonie Benson-Lone Members
Diane Kenchington-Magazines
Gayleen Bayliss-Publicity/Newsletter
Editor
Lyn Wickham-Coffee & Care
Denise Hird-New Born Ministry

Life Members

Noelle Freeman
Robyn Southerden
Laurel Brook

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.

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.

President's Ponderings



At our weekly Parish Dinner Church I was asked if I might like to do a short devotion. I decided to talk on Seasons. We think of the seasons – Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring – but when I looked in the dictionary, the definition for season was also a set of related programs on TV; to add salt, pepper, etc to food; or a set time for social or sports activities BUT the one I liked was – a proper or suitable time – good, bad, happy or sad season.

In the Bible it says God created different seasons in our lives to shape us, to help us cope but in the end will make everything beautiful in its own time. We need to remember and believe that God said he created every season for a purpose. So yes, even the hot summer or cold winter has its purpose.

It has been a busy first few months of the year especially as the excitement builds for the celebration for 150 years of Mothers Union Worldwide throughout the year. Our Executive Members have been working on some really exciting ways that our Newcastle Diocese can celebrate – so watch this space.

It was encouraging to see many of our Branches represented at our 1st Council Meeting held at All Saints New Lambton. We heard from Rev'd Kathy Trimby as she shared an entertaining story of her life in the UK before coming to Australia as well as some ideas for the 150 year celebrations. Rev'd Kathy was invited and accepted the role of Promotion and Communication Coordinator (PromCom for short) on our Executive. If you see Rev'd Kathy don't forget to ask how Muriel is going.

Our thanks go to Maitland Parish for welcoming Newcastle Diocese MU at St Mary's Maitland for our Lady Day Service on the 25th March. Our Diocesan Executive for the next 3 years were commissioned as well. The move was due to work being carried out at Christ Church Cathedral. Bishop Sonia was our officiating Bishop supported by our Chaplain Rev'd Nicole, Maitland Parish Priest Rev'd Sarah Dulley and Rev'd Christian Ford. It was lovely to see the service supported by so many MU members at this different venue. Rev'd Sarah shared her story on her recent visit to Cambodia while we shared light refreshments organised by Maitland MU Branch and parish.

Thank you to the Branches who have invited me to share in celebrations where I am always felt so welcome. Quite often Laurel accompanies me, which I appreciate.

Congratulations to Glenda Boundy, Helen Joice, Gail Turner and Gail Iles for their Long Membership and dedication to Mothers Union and also welcome to any new members.

We are grateful that Newcastle Diocese is supporting and recognising 150 years of Mothers Union Worldwide and will support us in promoting this great occasion. The media team have already been in touch with us and hopefully we will see articles as we celebrate throughout the year.

As we celebrate 150 years of Mothers Union please remember our Founder, Mary Sumner who 150 years ago had the vision to form a union of mothers who would unite in prayer for themselves and one another and said these words time and again -

“To win the homes of the nation for Christ.

Rich homes, and poor homes ... all alike ... must be won for God!

It is a call to every one of us to live in prayer that His help, His blessings, and His inspiration may rest upon our earnest efforts.”

May you all be richly blessed in this year of celebration.

Elizabeth Bissaker

MU Diocesan President



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Quiet Days

Stepping out in Faith



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He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat,
started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus.
Matthew 14.29

9.30am to 1pm
Please bring your lunch

Tuesday 13 th October 2026 St Paul's Anglican Church Lang Street, Kurri Kurri	Thursday 15 th October 2026 Church of the Good Shepherd 101 Joslin Street, Kotara
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Reflections for the Journey ~ Through the Seasons of Life~



Dear friends in Christ,

Life has a habit of happening whether we are ready for it or not. At times we may feel unsupported or wonder whether we are making much difference in the world. At other times, we see the impact of our relationships and the evidence of that love reflected in the lives of others. And beyond what we can see, there is an even greater encouragement: we are never alone. God is with us through every season of life.

This is the assurance Jesus gave to his disciples: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28.20b). These words were spoken as Jesus prepared to leave his disciples. Jesus did not promise them an easy path. Instead, he promised his presence. Whatever lay ahead, they would not face it alone. This is a promise we can trust and a source of hope in every season of life.

Life is made up of many seasons. Some bring joy and delight our hearts; others bring grief and leave us carrying sorrow. Between these highs and lows are the ordinary seasons, the days that seem unremarkable as life quietly unfolds. Perhaps it is in these ordinary times that we most need to remember God’s presence. In times of grief, we often turn instinctively to God for comfort. In times of celebration, we offer thanks and praise. But in the everyday moments of life, it can be easy to forget that Christ is still walking beside us.

One of the most beautiful reminders of God’s presence through all the changing seasons of life is found in Ecclesiastes: “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...”

The words that follow are honest, beautiful, and timeless. They acknowledge the reality of human experience: times of joy and sorrow, of building up and breaking down, of embracing and letting go, of mourning and dancing. Ecclesiastes reminds us that our lives unfold within a rhythm that God has ordained and holds within his loving care.

No one remains forever in a season of celebration, nor does anyone remain forever in a season of sorrow. Life moves and changes, carrying us through experiences that shape us and connect us to one another.

Yet Ecclesiastes does more than describe the seasons of life. It points us towards the God who stands above them and holds them all within his care. The promise of Jesus, “I am with you always,” is, in many ways, the fulfilment of the hope that Ecclesiastes hints at. There may be a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, but there is never a time when Christ is absent. There may be seasons when we feel lost, uncertain, or alone, but there is never a season beyond the reach of God’s love.

As we reflect on our own lives, we see these seasons more clearly. There have been times of laughter and times of tears, seasons of growth and seasons of waiting, moments of celebration and moments of loss. Through each season, our lives have become intertwined with the lives of others. The love we share, the friendships we nurture, the kindness we offer, and the faith we live out become threads woven into a larger tapestry. Our lives touch other lives, often in ways we may never fully know.

This is one of the quiet gifts of belonging to a community such as Mothers’ Union. Through shared prayer, fellowship, service, and friendship, our lives become woven together. We support one another in difficult seasons, rejoice together in times of blessing, and remind each other of God’s faithfulness in the ordinary moments in between.

The seasons of life touch us all in different ways. There are moments of laughter, moments of love, and moments of challenge that we carry with us. Through them all, the promise of Jesus remains unchanged: “I am with you always.” It is this promise that gives meaning to every season and hope for every tomorrow. Whatever season we find ourselves in today, we can trust that we do not walk it alone. Christ is with us, and he always will be. He walks beside us in the ordinary days and sustains us in the extraordinary ones. May we take heart in that promise, and may we continue to be signs of God’s love and faithfulness to one another in every season.

Prayerful love and blessings
Reverend Nicole

*The seasons of life will come and go,
but the promise of Christ remains:
in every season, in every circumstance,
and on every step of the journey, he is with us.*

Glenrock

On 15 April, Glenrock MU had the great pleasure of celebrating the long membership of two of our wonderful members. Helen Joice 60 years, admitted Diocese of Newcastle, Charlestown Branch and Glenda Boundy 54 years, admitted Diocese of Grafton, Casino Branch.



Helen and Glenda have been active MU members with leadership roles in Caritas, MU and Executive positions. Their contribution to the aims and objects of MU and their individual gifts and skills has been, and continues to be, immeasurable.

We welcomed our Diocesan President Elizabeth and Secretary Laurel to our group who presented Helen and Glenda with their badges and certificates during a Eucharist service conducted by our rector, Rev Toni. Afterwards we celebrated with a beautiful cake.



Congratulations Helen and Glenda!

Jane Conway
President Glenrock MU

150 Ways in 150 Days

is our way of celebrating the ministry of 150 years of Mothers Union worldwide. We would love for you to send photos of what you are doing in your branches so that we can share them on our Facebook page. In sharing what we are doing in our Branches, we will be raising awareness of Mothers

Union within our faith communities as well as the wider communities that we all seek to serve. We look forward to sharing your photos.

150 Ways in 150 Days begins on 21st June and concludes on 17th November 2026.



Please send your photos to: Rev'd Kathy - kathpant@aol.com
or Rev'd Nicole - nicolebaldwin@newcastleanglican.org.au

Jenny's Place

At our April MU meeting at Merewether, Donna George from Jenny's Place came to speak to us. Jenny's Place is a refuge in Newcastle for women and children fleeing domestic violence, and Donna is its Community Relations Coordinator. Our Branch has been supporting Jenny's Place with emergency goods for many years now, and our Parish has joined in to provide support, too.

Donna is a warm and dynamic speaker, and we learnt much from her about Jenny's Place concerning the breadth of its work, its difficulties and joys, its links with other organisations such as Friends with Dignity, its variety of fundraising efforts, and other ways in which we can support it. If you would like someone to visit your Branch to learn about Jenny's Place, Donna's contact address is DonnaGeorge@jennysplace.org and her mobile (M-W only) is 0191 271 7771.

Jeanette Johnston
President, Merewether MU

The Entrance

Dear beautiful Mothers Union family,

I believe that our dear friends and family currently residing in nursing homes have just as much right to continue their discipleship journey with God as we do and I would like to suggest a way for us to help them continue to bear fruit as God calls us to in the name of His Son Jesus the Christ.

I encourage you to write down 'I believe and receive Jesus' on pretty cards in medium to large size print so that these cards can be offered to our friends and family in nursing homes and they in turn can share them as God calls them to with the many people who come and go from their rooms and lives each day.

'I believe and receive Jesus.'

'Jesus loves you very much.' Is another great card to make too.

God bless you, one and all,
Isabella Ellis

Cheryl Stoddart's Birthday Gift

On Saturday, my family put on a birthday celebration for my upcoming 80th birthday. I said I didn't want any presents, but people could donate to my favourite charity, which is baby bundles.

As a result I now have an envelope containing \$600.00 and promises of more. I am so thrilled at this reaction from my 30 friends and family!

Cheryl Stoddart



Baby Bundles

It was so exciting to receive this email. What a wonderful gift to pass on to those in need. I thought such a blessing.

Blessings

Denise Hird

Lakes Anglican

We celebrated our 45th Birthday in March reminiscing. We looked at all our photo albums from 1981. We had a good laugh, and remembered dear past members.

We are now smaller in numbers, but love to meet together in worship.

Mothers are the theme for May with a history of Mothers Day.

Dorothee Crowther

Southlakes

In April, Gail Turner from Southlakes Branch received her 60 year membership certificate. She showed us her original membership card which was familiar to some of us. Gail also talked about her early life as a Priest's wife in Armidale and Newcastle Dioceses.



Gail and Elizabeth

Taree



Taree Mothers Union decided to celebrated the 150 Anniversary by having a “Month of Prayer”.

We purchased wooden doves for the congregation to write a prayer request on and then they were hung on an olive tree.

On the 31st May at our one parish service Reverend Natalie blessed the prayer tree and the doves were distributed to the members to include in their daily prayers.

We also went to Alkira Lodge for our May meeting to visit Margaret, a member of Taree. A lovely morning of prayer, worship, chit chat and laughs from a little book “Short Prayers for Long Days” by Greg Mitchell.

Kim Bussey
Taree Small Group



Olive tree



Margaret, Josephine, Kim, Leonie and Ruth.

My Journey From OS to Aus...

... via the Emerald Isle not the city, and with a sassy EMU called Murial not Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tinman and Lion!! Sharing my story of Mothers Union and how and where Murial and I met and how we joined forces to remind members we may be different, with different stories, as are all members of Mothers Union, but there is room for us all and it caters for all and ultimately, we are all birds of a feather!

My Mothers Union journey began at a young age, with Mum as Enrolling Member of the branch where Dad served as Vicar. Mum took me to meetings, where adopted aunties and grannies looked after me and I was vaguely aware of this local and international thing. Much later, as Curate, I learned more about Mothers Union and how it's vision, aims and objectives mirrored my own calling of the valuing and nurturing of relationship, working hand in hand with social justice and underpinned by prayer. But as a single person, despite attending meetings of both afternoon and evening groups to lead worship, sadly membership was not permitted then for me, til much later, whilst working in the Emerald Isle as priest, through creative use of the truth, and with rules relaxed, I was persuaded to become a member by a third party. Recalling my calling in ministry echoed the vision, aims and objects of Mothers Union, I became a member nearly 25 years ago. I quickly became active in the Diocese first as Young Member, then Diocesan Faith and Policy co coordinator and later becoming All Ireland Faith and Policy coordinator. It was in this role things were to take on a slightly different slant, and I first met Murial, my alter ego and friend, my co worker in promoting and living out our passion for Mothers Union!

Our focus for the leadership conference of newly elected offices, was to enthuse and encourage by equipping, and enabling them in their respective roles - all the e's plus MU, and EMU was born! Named MURIAL at the conference (Mothers Union in All Ireland brings Joy) and admitted as a member by the then World Wide President, Lynne Tembey, Murial wasn't afraid to ask or answer the difficult questions. She was passionate about all aspects of Mothers Union and recognised the value of all of it - the need for the



connection by most members enjoying getting together for a cuppa and a chat, the involvement in campaigns such as 'Bye, Buy Childhood' plus others, having a voice at the United Nations regarding the status of women and gender based issues, to the simple gestures of kindness in knitting for prem babies, or trauma teddies, the work with jails, refuges, not to mention literacy, numeracy and being frontline at disasters. Mothers Union changed lives, transformed lives, she knew that, I knew that, and we weren't afraid to tell that to anyone who would listen and even those who wouldn't then. We joined forces to keep doing that wherever we were and still are. God may have called us now over the sea, half way across the world to minister and serve here in New South Wales, and in Newcastle Anglican but her message and mine, was and is, the same, and having introduced Murial at Mothers Union Council, our Mission is still challenging at times, enthusiastic and passionate, and together we are calling members to celebrate who they are and what they do here now as part of Mothers Union, locally, nationally and internationally and be joyful about it and to continue to be enthusiastic, energetic, enigmatic, encouraged and to be enabled and equipped for now to transform, challenge, change and build relationship, to get others to join us by joining in and underpin all in faith and belief.

We have much to celebrate today and over the last 150 years and much still to do in the next 150 years starting with our 150 Ways in 150 Days.

Rev'd Kathy Trimby



First Council Meeting at All Saints

Lady Day at St Mary's Maitland

The Parish of Maitland welcomed us to St Mary's for our Lady Day Eucharist. It was a delight to see all who were able to be there for our celebrations. We are so very grateful to Rev'd Sarah, the members of Mothers Union Maitland, the Parish, and those who normally attend a service at St Mary's on Wednesday's for your welcome and hospitality.

Bishop Sonia presided and preached, sharing with us some of the story of our founder, Mary Sumner, and encouraging us in our ministries. It is good to be reminded of the things that we have heard before. When the context changes, we sometimes hear things we have not heard before. Bishop Sonia reminded us Mary Sumner believed

'that she could make a difference for others. Her focus was young mothers, as well as upholding the importance of marriage as a safe and stable way of life for the women of her community.'

Bishop Sonia went on to say

I was also interested to read that she was "a living example of what she preached." Your own history tells how Mary Sumner and her members began to advocate on issues of key importance to families and children. For example, she campaigned to stop "children collecting alcohol from public houses for their families", and again, "for the age of marriage for girls to be raised from 12 to 16". It's hard to believe isn't! We know too that she supported her unwed niece and son. In all of this she showed great courage and faith.

29 years later, as Mothers Union sought to spread its influence across the Empire, Bishop Stretch and his wife Amelia called a meeting at Bishops Court Morpeth, attended by 6 leading women to talk about setting up Mothers Union in this Diocese. Bishop and Mrs Stretch wanted to see this wave of women ministering to each other and offering mutual support, here in this Diocese.

150 years later, we celebrate the humble beginnings of what is now a worldwide ministry of making a meaningful difference through our unique, faith-based and community-led approach to tackling poverty, injustice and violence. Know that our ministry in Mothers Union is deeply valued and changes lives, both the lives of others and our own!

Photos from Lady Day



DIARY DATES 2026

JUNE

11 th - 13 th	Diocesan Wave of Prayer	9.30am for 10am	Cardiff
19 th Friday	2 nd Council Meeting		

AUGUST

3 rd Monday	ONO Luncheon	9.30am for 10am	New Lambton
4 th Tuesday	ONO Luncheon	9.30am for 10am	Wyong
9 th Sunday	Mary Sumner Day		
17 th Monday	Executive Meeting	9.30am for 10am	Southlakes

SEPTEMBER

1 st Tuesday	Anglican Women Spring Festival	10am for morning tea	East Maitland
30 th to 3 rd October	150 years World Gathering in Durban South Africa		

OCTOBER

13 th Tuesday	Quiet Day	9.30am to 1pm	Kurri Kurri
15 th Thursday	Quiet Day	9.30am to 1pm	Kotara South
19 th Monday	Executive Meeting	9.30am for 10am	Raymond Terrace

NOVEMBER

20 th Friday	Annual General Meeting	9.30am for 10am	Merewether
25 th November to 10 th December	16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence		



God's Promise

The rainbow of God's promise
Is always shining bright,
And when the storm is over
We'll see its blessed light.

And if we'll only trust him
As little children do,
He'll take us gently by the hand
And see us safely through.

by Besty Kline

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER 26th October 2026

Please send your Mothers Union news, photos, stories, poems, etc
to: Gayleen

Email: stjohnscottage@bigpond.com

I will acknowledge your email when I receive it.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement your email may have gone astray,
so please contact me or re-send the email. Thank you.

Websites

munewcastle.org.au and muaustralia.org.au

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