



MU Australia
Part of the World Wide Mothers' Union

**Diocese of The Murray
South Australia**

THE MURRAY CON-TRIBUTARY NEWSLETTER

May 2017

“Faith in Action”

Dear Friends,

Tucked away in the Old Testament is a story of such proportions that it continues to weave its way down to us today. It begins with Samuel, the treasured son of Hannah. As a young lad Samuel heard God's voice. It was a life changing experience for him, and when he realised just who was calling to him he immediately replied: 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Samuel grew up to be a priest and a prophet. He continued to listen, always tuned in to God's voice, and sure enough, at a critical point in history, God called him to the vital task of choosing a new king for the people of Israel. God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem to visit Jesse, father of numerous sons, from whom this choice would be made. Jesse proudly paraded his many talented sons in front of Samuel, but none of them, Samuel felt certain, was the one chosen by God to be king.

In desperation Jesse sent for his young teenage son, David, whose job it was to look after his Dad's sheep, and whose only obvious talents were his accuracy with a slingshot to protect the sheep from wild animals, and his self taught ability to play the makeshift harp (the guitar of today no doubt) while thinking of words to match his music.

As soon as David appeared before Samuel God said: 'Rise and anoint him: this is the one.' This could certainly not have been the result anyone had expected and it is fair to say that David's path from the sheepfold to the throne was a rough and difficult journey.

Several things happened very quickly that put his two small claims to fame to the test. The first related to his ability with his slingshot, which gave him the confidence to enter what must have seemed like an Olympic size stadium, to take on, and conquer, the might of the giant Goliath.

David's second gift, his music, might have encouraged him in today's world to enter 'Israel's Got Talent' but in fact just at that time Saul, the reigning king, was searching for a musician. David was just the man, so from a field full of sheep to a palace – such an amazing story of God's guiding hand.

This story speaks to us of the possibilities open to each one of us for using our gifts and talents, small and large, obvious and subtle, in celebration of God's love and of his guiding hand in our lives that may, at times, be similar to David's; a rough and tumble path not chosen by us, but along which we must nevertheless travel. David experienced many highs and lows. We know this because of the amazing legacy he left us in the Psalms of David, and with which we can identify in all the circumstances of life, from great sadness to celebration.

In this world today of wars, terror and uncertainty we must trust in God's love to guide us in our daily lives and prepare us for events of the future.

With my love,

Families Equip Facilitators - Parenting Programme.

Thank you to Liz Hampel for arranging and organising this course for new Facilitators. We now have other Facilitators in the Diocese who will help her in this valuable work with Parents.

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Overseas and Northern Outreach.

News about the Peace and Reconciliation Project.

Eleven representatives from the countries involved met over 3 days in February to share what Mothers Union is doing in the area of Peace and Reconciliation in their own countries. They were assisted in their discussions by a representative from Mary Sumner House and from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Reconciliation team. It was agreed that Mothers Union should continue to be involved **in the development of training for women in leadership so that they might be involved in Peace and Reconciliation processes.** What this training will involve is not clear at this point, and the Mary Sumner House staff are currently working to establish just what the working group would like them to do.



This is a new venture for Mothers Union, and therefore it may seem that things move very slowly. Do continue to share the need for finance to enable this project to get off the ground. Lots of time is needed to call people together and then to establish clear communication between participants so that what Mary Sumner House offers to deliver actually matches what the workers in each country actually want.

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News about One of our Diocesan Links.

SOUTH SUDAN – FINDING HOPE.

Lui, in South Sudan, is one of the dioceses with which the Mothers Union in The Murray is linked for prayerful support.

South Sudan, the youngest country in the world, has spent much of the last three years in the midst of a civil war. The war has been a political crisis that has spilled over into an ethnic conflict. After some signs of improvement with the inauguration of the Unity Government, the violence has restarted in Juba and the government is in disarray.

Church leaders in Juba have been engaged in urgent talks to find solutions to “the forgotten war in the heart of Africa”. Reconciliation of opposing forces is the only way to peace. In this time of uncertainty, the church is using its influence to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation. Mothers Union in Juba Diocese is very active in the Peace Dialogue through the Prayer Clinics of the Sudan Council of Churches. The Sudan Council of Churches is trying to bring women of different tribes together. In the camp for displaced people in Juba, Nuer women were leaving the compound, thinking that they would be killed. Now the Dinka women have started to accompany the Nuer women to collect firewood and to go to the market. This is a sign of peace.

South Sudan has recently been named by the UN as one of three countries in north-eastern Africa facing a crisis of lack of food and imminent starvation of many people unless urgent action is taken. So please pray for progress in reconciliation, peace, and hope in South Sudan.

Caroline Earl (Mothers Union Diocesan Overseas and Northern Outreach representative)

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Grants Given by MU Australia 2017

From the Northern Outreach Fund. (Amount in Fund: \$38,000.00)

North Queensland

Contribution towards travel costs of Executive members from remote areas to meetings and training days, including planned visits to Cape York and other remote locations by Executive members for the training and encouragement of Mothers Union members. **\$12,000.00**

Northern Territory

Domestic Violence Training for clergy **\$2,200.00**
Ongoing “Safe Ministry” Training **\$10,000.00**

North West Australia

Support for 2017 “Fellow Workers” Conference
Wives & Families **\$40,000.00**
Support for the Bishop’s wife to travel to remote
areas to visit clergy wives **\$4,000.00**

TOTAL **\$68,200.00**



From the Training Fund for Indigenous Women. Amount available: \$14,000.00

North Queensland

Provision of workbooks, Bibles and reference books for students graduating from Wontulp-bi-Buya College
\$2,000.00 plus an extra \$5,000 for NQ (see below *) **\$7,000.00**

Northern Territory

Pastoral support for indigenous leaders (mostly women) in remote communities around the N.T. and bursaries for them and their families to attend a Family Camp . **\$5,000.00**



Provision of bursaries for recent graduates of Nungalingya College to continue their studies or attend ministry training conferences.

\$1,500.00

TOTAL

\$13,500.00

\$5,500.00 **less** than the amount available. Therefore, we have offered North Queensland an additional amount of \$5,000.00 because the amount requested by them is actually only about half of the actual expected costs. As you can also see, the requests for money from the Northern Outreach Fund totalled more than we have in that Fund. Since all the requests are for very worthwhile projects, and we do know that every diocese tries hard to self-fund their activities, the Overseas and Outreach Committee, together with all Diocesan Presidents agreed to draw some monies held in MU funds, amounting roughly to 10% of this money – a good Biblical figure, I think!

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Thank you

Recently, this note of thanks from the Diocese of the Northern Territory has been received ...

“We are very grateful for MU Australia’s support for the Diocese of the Northern Territory through the Northern Outreach fund. In a diocese that is small in population but large in geography, it is essential that we have partners like MU to help us in our ministry. The funding you have provided has been used in areas including training to help people in ministry understand and deal with domestic violence, safe ministry, support for training and care of Aboriginal ministers.”

How encouraging it is to know that our grants (that is, each member’s contribution, and all your fund-raising efforts,) are so much appreciated .

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A letter from Rev. Kate Beer from the Diocese of Northern Territory.

I want to write to thank you for your generous and practical support for the ministry here in the Northern Territory Diocese. We are grateful to God for your partnership and hope this letter will give you something of a picture of the ministry you are supporting.

Domestic Violence Training

Domestic and Family Violence is a significant issue here in the NT, and an identified need from clergy and church leaders was to have some training in this area. Rachel Neary, a Christian with extensive experience in this field was the facilitator for the day, and many people, with varied roles in the church and para-church organisations, attended. The feedback from participants has highlighted how important and helpful it was and we are just so thankful to Mother’s Union members for providing for the costs to enable this vital training day to go ahead.

Safe Ministry Training

As you are no doubt aware, the whole area of safe ministry practice in the church is in the process of significant review in the Anglican church. This review is not only a response to the appalling revelations which emerged from the Royal Commission, but also necessary as the church seeks to glorify God amid heightened societal standards in this area. Communicating best practice in the area of Safe Ministry in our Diocese carries particular cross-cultural and linguistic challenges and in a small Diocese such as that in the NT, we have few resources for responding to this desperate need. The travel costs alone of sending a trainer to some of our remote parishes are prohibitive, yet it must be done. For this reason, we give thanks to God for the generous partnership of MU in enabling us to seek consultancy help as well as assisting with the costs of running safe ministry awareness workshops for all church workers and volunteers across such a geographically huge region.

Pastoral Support and Travel costs for Indigenous Church leaders

As already mentioned, the geographic vastness of the NT Diocese leaves many of our remote clergy quite isolated in ministry. Christian leadership in remote contexts can be both draining and very lonely as people bear a significant pastoral burden which cannot easily be shared. MU's partnership with the Diocese assists with the travel costs of providing remote and isolated clergy and church leaders with pastoral visits in their location and participation in Diocesan gatherings. One such gathering planned for later in 2017 is a family camp for clergy, church leaders and their families. It is hoped that this gathering will be a great encouragement to those families who attend.

Bursaries for Church leaders to continue their studies through attending conferences or online study courses.

Finally, we are grateful for the special thoughtfulness of MU in setting aside specific funds for Indigenous women who wish to study. One particular challenge for remote Aboriginal women is how to continue their learning around family and ministry responsibilities. It is hoped that this will enable some Indigenous women who have already completed their Nungalinga studies to continue their learning through either travelling to attend a conference, or enrolling in online courses.

Thank you again for your generous partnership in supporting the women and men of our diocese in these practical areas of need.

Yours in Christ, Kate Beer

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Mount Barker Mothers' Union Celebration of Community Care Groups.

In response to the Diocese of the Murray's call to join together with neighbouring parishes and "Ignite Growth", and a strong sense that God is calling us to step out into the community in faith, our Parish of Mt Barker Mothers Union group hosted a "Celebration of Community Care Groups"

Representatives from the following groups were allowed 5 mins for a presentation,

The **Zonta Club of the Adelaide Hills** - "Expect Respect" project.

Mount Barker Uniting Church "**Hungry No More**" - A weekly meal and on going support for people in need, both physically and spiritually.

Anglican Community Care, Murray Bridge – servicing the Adelaide Hills, and in this case, homeless people.

House of Hospitality, Strathalbyn Parish - The old rectory, used to support people spiritually, and physically.

Balhannah Opportunity Shop – run by the Onkaparinga Parish to support the parish finances and more importantly, support community initiatives.

"Families Equip" - MU Australia's parenting program - Anglican Parish of Mt Barker.

"Chat and Do" - a craft program run by the Mt Barker Baptist Church, involving up to 80 women on a weekly basis.

"Not by Sight Alone" - a monthly group for people with low vision offered by the Mount Barker Parish.

University of the Third Age.

"Helpless Colony Orphanage, Nepal" - supported by the Mount Barker Parish, Minlaton parish on Yorke Peninsula, and many other people in the community.

This was followed by small group discussions, feed back to the whole group, "looking forward" and "Midday Prayers" from the Mothers Union prayer book.

This comment from a participant at the conclusion of the session sums up the general feeling of the meeting:-

"I get tired of all the negatives in the media! This was a morning of positive information which was most uplifting"

Plans for the future? - a) To use this information as the beginning of a data base which can be accessed on a website, b) To arrange another community opportunity similar to this, c) To continue to seek God's guidance as we reach out to **all** of His people.

Liz Hampel

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Forthcoming Dates

The Murray MU AGM and Council - Monday 24th July at St. Hilary's, Morphett Vale.

Mary Sumner Day - Provincial Gathering, Wednesday 9th August at St. Michael's, Mitcham.

MU Council meeting of The Murray Diocese - Monday 6th November at St. Ann's. Aldinga