

Diocese of The Murray, South Australia.

**THE MURRAY
CON-TRIBUTARY
NEWSLETTER**



Transformation - Now!

September 2023

Dear Friends,

As I write this I am still on a high after 2 great services that I attended at Mt Barker recently. The first was our Mary Sumner Day celebration with Robin Ray our Australian President present. Her sermon was inspiring and a portion of it is printed below for those who could not attend. After lunch she led us in discussions regarding our thoughts on AMUA in our diocese and lots of ideas were submitted. It was great to have Bishop Keith taking our service I am sure that and both he and Alison, one of our deacons, learnt more about AMUA too.

The second service was the ordination of 4 Deacons, of these 3 were women which as you know is an exciting first for our Diocese. The church was packed with people standing along the walls. The singing at both services was outstanding and the message that came with both important services I am sure put us all on the right path for the future.

Please keep up your prayers for our Diocese and give thanks that Robin was able to join us here in South Australia to share her enthusiasm with us.

We have been advised that there will be no new Christmas Cards this year and cards will still be at a good price.

love and blessings from Jocelyn

-OOO-

Part of Robin's sermon:.....

Today I will use Mary Sumner's personal prayer and our objectives to help us to consider who we are and should be as members of MU. As you well know, Mary Sumner's prayer begins:

All this day O Lord,

Immediately, the emphasis is on our Lord God, reinforcing the centrality of our faith defining who we are as members of MU.

let me touch as many lives as possible for thee (you).

Our work as members of MU is clearly focused on connecting with others, relationships with those among who we live, work and have our being (Act 17:28). Every one of our objects/objectives is predicated on positively connecting with others. The lives we touch can be as close as family (sometimes the most challenging), neighbours, a smile or a positive word, sharing our faith with grandchildren, or in more complex or distant situations as when we raise money to support those whose lives have met with adversity or advocate for social change. This 'Fair Trade' fortnight we have an added opportunity to consider what we buy, where it comes from and who benefits.

And every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken (Jesus/God enliven though the Holy Spirit)

For me, this line says something about the nature of our interactions with others. In our Australian society, there is much emphasis on the individual. Advertising is about what you need to be successful, physically beautiful, or up with the newest technology. If we focus on ourselves, our attitudes and reactions to others are seen through our own perspective. God is no longer at the centre of our lives effecting our relationships. The ways in which we interact with people could become a stumbling block for them experiencing the enlivening work of the Holy Spirit.

Whether through the word I speak,

Again, this phrase causes us to reflect on how we use our communication (body language and verbally) to interact with others. I am a person who is passionate about certain issues that are important to me. Often, I need to rein in my response particularly in meetings or situations when I don't agree or when I'm advocating for someone else. We need to be conscious of the message we give through our body language, think before we speak, make sure that we have permission share information, we speak the truth and not gossip. Modifying our reactions is also essential if we are to effectively touch others with the Christian faith and interest others in the work of MU. Our words need to convey positive and enthusiastic messages about the work of MU here and worldwide.

The prayer I breathe,

Daily prayer is an essential element of our lives as Christian members of MU. Using prayer diaries can help us pray effectively across a range of issues. For example, I use the Anglican Communion and diocesan prayer diary as well as others such as prayer diaries for Anglican Overseas Aid and military chaplains. Our MU Prayer diary (which I also try to use daily) is a great resource to assist us to pray regularly for fellow members around the world as part of maintaining the worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer worship and service. Purposively praying for specific situations or people focuses our prayer life beyond ourselves. While praying for others in groups or congregational settings is commended by scripture (Matthew 18:20 When two or three are gathered in my name...) we need to be careful of confidentiality. God does not need all the details and we do not need to know personal information to pray effectively.

Or the life I live.

As this is a new triennium for AMUA, the new Australian Executive met for a visioning weekend. We spent time in prayer and bible study as well as reflecting on where we are as AMUA and when we could be as we go forward. We recognise the need to redevelop the Handbook to be more flexible and remove the rigidity that is not sustainable or useful for current and prospective members (hopefully ready for next year). The way we live as members of MU needs to be relevant to the families we serve through our objectives.

We developed a framework that centred on God and our faith leading to our objectives. We know the importance of positive relationships for psychological and emotional health – meeting together to socialise is something MU does well. However, we also need to nurture and build on our skills and knowledge to equip us for the service to which we are called. Inwardly nurturing includes all these things as integral to our life in MU. However, it can't all be about our inward selves.

Our objectives call us to be outwardly focused, to serve those around us. Many of you already incorporate aspects of your MU life that are outwardly focused. These will vary according to your context, capability and motivation. As mentioned earlier, we all know the value of prayer. Praying for others outside our usual sphere is one form of being outwardly focused. There are other ways that we can identify and explore together later. The important message from Jesus' teaching and Mary Sumner's prayer is that the way we live our lives matters. If we are to take MU forward as a vibrant organisation that people will want to belong to, we need to take stock of the present, value what is good and change those parts of the way we live out MU that inhibit others from joining.

God our rock, promises to be with us always. As MU we are to live into Jesus' teaching of love and justice in mission and service to families and the wider communities both here and abroad. Robin Ray

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Diary Dates: Note some changes of routine for 2023

Could those of you who need to submit a report for the AGM report book please have it sent to Ronda by 22nd September at the latest.

October 9th: .. AGM/ Council This year we have decided to hold our short AGM and Council meeting on Monday October 9th after a Thanksgiving service and BYO lunch. This will be held at St Aidans, Homestead Drive, Aberfoyle Park commencing with refreshments at 10.30am and service at 11am.

October 20th:..State Meeting at St Barnabas building North Adelaide.10.30am. All welcome

There will be no November Diocesan service and celebration this year.

Our World Wide President Sheran Harper will be coming to Australia in May 2024. Perth 13th May, 18th May in Brisbane and 22nd May will be open day with Sheran during Australian Council in Sydney. She will not be making a stop in South Australia but if your holiday plans could fit with any of the above you would be able to meet her and hear from her.