



Wendy's Writings May 2022



Prayer in Action

*Don't wait for things to be simpler, easier,
or better. Life will always be complicated.
Learn to be happy now. And know that
no matter the time or day, it will always be now.*

(Kobi Yamada: Finding Muchness, How to add more life to life)

Dear all,

The time is definitely now. Our secretary Jan has recently sent documentation to all branch contacts for our elections which will be conducted in the coming months for the 2023-25 triennium. All positions on Executive are open to any Diocesan Mothers' Union members who wish to nominate. With a number of executive members advising that they will not be renominating for any positions, and others who have completed their two terms of office in their current roles needing to step down from their current positions, we are needing other members to step forward to offer themselves for the ministry of serving Mother's Union as a member of our Diocesan Executive. Please prayerfully consider whether yourself or another branch member may be called to serve in this way.

Executive Positions for the 2023-25 Triennium are:

- Diocesan President
- Diocesan Vice President
- Diocesan Treasurer
- Publication Department Co-ordinator
- Promotion and Development Co-ordinator
- Social Issues and Action Co-ordinator
- Overseas and Northern Outreach and Links Co-ordinator
- Prayer and Spirituality Co-ordinator
- Mustard Tree Editor and Mia Mia Correspondent and/or Mia Mia and Mustard Tree Distributor (*non-executive if not the same person as the Editor*)

Please ask your branch president, secretary or contact person for the nomination papers and accompanying documentation. I would be happy to answer any questions members may have about the Executive.

I remind you all that Executive is happy to receive nominations for consideration for the awarding of Life Membership to Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Bunbury. Guidelines for nominations were circulated with my April newsletter. If you would like a copy please don't hesitate to contact me. Please remember that not all nominations may be successful so it is

very important that this matter is handled with sensitivity to avoid hurt or misunderstandings from occurring. Nominations received by our June executive meeting on the 15th will be considered with a view to any successful nominations being announced for presentation at Country Rally in late October.

As promised, a copy of our Friendship Day program is attached. A reminder that these days will be held in Brunswick on Thursday 16th June, and in Kojonup on Thursday 28th July. The program for both days will be the same. Through the use of prayer shingles and the making of and learning how to use prayer beads we will be exploring a very tactile way to reflect and pray. It is hoped that by holding two days in differing regions of our diocese members may be able to attend the day that is the most convenient for them. Revd Vicki Webb will be leading much of the program on both days, with the assistance of Revd Kevin Toovey in Kojonup.

Members may like to consider whether they have 10-15 beads at home that are of some significance that they would like to use to create their own prayer chaplet. Alternatively, you may like to purchase some beads that appeal. While it is not a requirement that you bring your own beads, it may add extra significance to your future use of your prayer chaplet if the beads you use come with a story that is special to you. We will have a supply of beads for those who do not bring their own and all other materials will be provided.

By now you have all hopefully received the somewhat delayed Autumn Mia Mia and 2022 Prayer Diary. I encourage you all to use your prayer diary regularly. As I opened mine this evening I was drawn to the monthly prayer for May:

*We draw near to the God of Peace
With thanks for our reconciliation
through the work of the cross.
We offer ourselves as peacemakers
in a world that cries out
to live in peace and safety. Amen*

As a part of the Wave of Prayer, our Diocese will be particularly remembered in prayer by Mothers' Union members around the world on 21 -23 May alongside Christ the King in South Africa, East Rwenzori in Uganda, and Gombe & New Busa in Nigeria. The theme for the week of 15 – 23 May is security and shelter, while the theme for 22-28 May is conflict resolution. We bridge these two weeks. I hope all our branches are able to celebrate the Wave of Prayer Service at some time during May.

Each week I lead Wednesday Morning Prayer in our church, occasionally also covering other days. These services are all broadcast on our parish Facebook page. While of recent times I have been drawing my prayers from the Anglican Prayer Book for Australia, I have also at times taken my prayers from our Mothers' Union Worship and Prayer Book. In coming weeks, I will be using the 2022 Prayer Diary. It is indeed a very rich resource which I look forward to sharing with the many people who follow our broadcasts.

Over the next month I will be visit branches in Carey Park, Pinjarra and Albany to present service awards to members who were unable to attend Lady Day. I look forward to catching up with our members during my visits.

Below I share with you a letter received in April from our Provincial President Anne. I hope you enjoy reading the story of Jocelyn. It is a story that speaks to our call to respond to issues of Social Issues and Action.

Every blessing,
Wendy Mabey,
Bunbury Diocesan President,
Anglican Mothers' Union of Australia



Dear Diocesan Presidents,

One of the benefits of the Covid situation has been the opportunity to gather with MU members from around the world via Zoom to pray together and to share our concerns.

Along with many others I meet regularly, is Jocelyn Razafiarivony, MU Provincial Coordinator, from Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world and home to more than 28 Million people. Jocelyn recently spoke on behalf of MU at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women about the relationship between climate change and gender inequality. I'd like to share her story with you.

Her address shone a light on the devastating impact the world's first climate induced famine has had on women in Madagascar. Most were left to fend for themselves and their families in the wake of a massive rural exodus of men.

"Because of famine, the men left the region to go to the capital of Madagascar in a massive rural exodus. Women could not go anywhere. They were a burden so they had to stay. As caregivers, they were not able to feed their families any longer. They were only eating cactus and boiled water. They were really starving."

The country was plagued by a 40 year drought which was a significant factor in creating this famine, that many people to this day are unaware of. In this country, more than 80% of the population live below the poverty line, earning less than US\$2 per day. Jocelyne shared how families struggled to find water and food for daily consumption, walking tens of kilometers to WFP (World Food Program) camps to get food aid, "The impact of climate change is visible and real". She shared how two women with large families, Manantena and Dophine, barely had anything to feed their families. The situation was deteriorating quickly, and when Mothers' Union stepped in, these women and their families were so weak they could barely stand. As an immediate response, MU fed them for a week to help them regain their strength. This initial support also helped them gather their courage and prepare for a mobilized, community led response to the crisis. They were given the necessary material and skills needed to build resilience for a longer period of time:

"Then, they became stronger, they were mobilized as a community and given sweet potato stems and maize seeds to grow in the land that has been left abandoned. They could get some harvests, using part of them as food to eat and storing another part, after peeling and drying them."

In this instance, Jocelyne says, Mothers' Union acted as 'agents of change' in the lives of these women who in turn, have now become agents of change for their communities by passing this knowledge down to others. Some of the key highlights of MU's work are:

- They began building resilience in 2018, prioritising community resilience towards natural and man-made disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the importance of this work as national lockdowns added more pressure on households.
- The most affected communities were helped to identify their local challenges, look for solutions and take actions to help them become more resilient to climate change.

Mothers' Union have worked with the communities to build skills in the following ways:

1. Community Mobilisation – Empowering communities to manage their own development.
2. Risk Assessment – Assessing the hazards or threats, understanding the vulnerabilities in the communities and taking stock of the available resources.
3. Disaster Risk Reduction implementation – Establishing early warning systems, household survival kits and designating places for shelter and security.

The solution, according to Jocelyne. is threefold, she suggests:

“There should be a synergy and a complementarity of all actions. NGOs, the Church and all associations should unite their efforts to reduce the effects of climate change.”

She also feels that the impact of climate change on women and girls can be reduced by tackling the problem of gender inequality at large, that plays a massive role in the way that men and women bear the burden of such crises. While men are free to travel in search of work, women are left behind as they are solely responsible for providing food, water and fuel to their families. They do not have access to education beyond primary school as it is considered more important for them to be helping their mothers at home. In case of disasters, they do not have access to healthcare. Jocelyne suggests that women and girls need to be given more consideration “economically, socially and culturally”, and that they need a seat at the decision making table regarding development projects and resource allocation related to climate change.

But above all, she suggests, the accelerating problem of climate change needs to be halted in one way or another. It disproportionately impacts countries such as Madagascar, and equally women and girls. Along with better resilience training, representation and emergency aid – they need climate change to stop.

“The United Nations should seriously consider the case of Madagascar. We are the least emitter of carbon while we are the most severely stricken by climate change.”

For Jocelyne, having a voice at a platform such as the UN was a proud moment. She was keen to seize the opportunity to give maximum information about the situation in Madagascar and raise an urgent call to action. She hopes that in due time, these ideas will be realized and the women of Madagascar won't have to rely on boiled cactus and water for sustenance ever again.

Mothers' Union has “consultative status” at the United Nations (ECOSOC), which means that we are able to both submit a statement in advance, and send a delegation. This year, MU delegation to UNCSW included 12 members from 9 countries, including Jocelyne Razafiarivony. This year's priority theme was: Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

Jocelyn's story is an inspiring one. MU can make a difference and IS making a difference. AMUA'S recently announced Overseas Target Fund, in partnership with Anglican Overseas Aid, is one way that we can help build resilience in our neighbouring Pacific nations where climate change is taking its toll on communities there.

As climate change affects our own country, causing dreadful floods this year, please remember the AMUA Disaster Relief Fund when you are raising funds this year. We expect that grants from this fund will be applied for widely, so it's important to make sure that our 'bucket of money' is refilled as we distribute money to communities as they begin to rebuild. Perhaps you might consider running a special event for the AMUADRF in your branch or Diocese?

Love and peace,
Anne
Rev'd. Anne Kennedy
Provincial President
Anglican Mothers Union Australia



*Praying globally – serving locally
Supporting family life
Advocating for social justice*

