

NEW SHOOTS OF LIFE

Alison Fernandes demonstrates how the **Metamorphosis** process leads to growth

See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create.
(Isaiah 65:17-18b)

In our Metamorphosis module on Discovering our Vision and Celebrating our Resources, we reflect on the wonderful picture in Isaiah 65 of God's intention for his kingdom and how we can relate to one another and exist as a mutually supportive community. The themes of joy and life shine through. We use art to help us reflect on aspects of this vision that we want to see become reality in our own community.

We then look at Elijah and the widow's oil in 2 Kings 4:1-7, where a community is involved in saving a vulnerable family from disaster, illustrating how God responds to faith and creates an abundance from the little we

have. We also reflect on our own faith and how we make the most of our God-given resources.

The 'timeline tool' (pictured below) helps us apply our learning, by reflecting back on our churches, MU branches, or initiatives, to plot different events over time, including the highs and lows. We consider what has been learnt and how we can build in the future.

For one of our Metamorphosis participants, this module brought new life and a change in attitude towards her church. The timeline helped bring a different perspective, highlight the good things about church, their

resources (even though money was short and the vicar was leaving). It gave a sense that, although things were tough, God could use them to bring new life. Covid grants were accessed; lay people and clergy from neighbouring areas helped keep services running. Despair and negativity gave way to new shoots of life, as the church drew on its God-given resources to continue to be a presence and a beacon of hope in their community.

This is one of many stories of new hope and life from Metamorphosis – churches becoming outward-looking and reversing decline in MU branches. All through listening to and engaging with God, using practical tools to put our faith into action.

Metamorphosis is a process for anyone wanting to see change in their church and community. Prayer and Bible study are at the heart of the process, giving people confidence and practical tools to put faith into action. Our Metamorphosis courses have eight modules and run twice a year. If you are interested in joining Metamorphosis, contact alison.fernandes@mothersunion.org

