

Welcome and Gathering:

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Service of Thanksgiving. We gather in gratitude for our heritage, and in particular, the life and vision of our founder, Mary Sumner. We praise God for this strong foundation upon which we build as we seek to live out our vision and mission in a 21st Century context. We gather to give thanks for the faithfulness of God who continues to speak to us, leading us forward together on our journey of faith.

Call to Worship:

The Lord is with us

Let us praise his name together.

You have made known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.

Psalms 16: 11

Our faithful God, we come to worship with joyful hearts.

Let us praise his name together. Amen.

Opening Hymn:

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

God rules in the height, almighty to save;
though hid from our sight, his presence we have;
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

'Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!'
let all cry aloud, and honour the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore and give him his right:
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,
all honour and blessing with angels above
and thanks never ceasing for infinite love.

Charles Wesley [1707–1788]

Prayer of Preparation:

**Heavenly Father, prepare us for our journey as we determine to follow you,
following in the footsteps of those who have gone before.**

Guide us in prayer to seek your ways for meaningful life.
Fill us with power to follow your plans for valuable service.

**Heavenly Father, lead us forward in your love as we gladly follow you.
United together in vision and purpose to gladly serve your world. Amen.**

Confession:

**Merciful Lord, who died to reconcile us with God, forgive us when we shun
the narrow path of obedience and faith and walk along the broad road of selfishness and sin.
Help us to set our life's direction to follow Christ wholeheartedly,
in company with our fellow pilgrims. Amen.**

Absolution:

May our merciful Lord reach out to us with loving forgiveness and grace.
May we know the joy of restoration to gladly serve our God. **Amen.**

New Testament Reading:

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. Hebrews 12: 1–3

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading:

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you" '. Luke 10: 1–9

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Hymn:

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Reaffirmation of the Vision and Mission of Mothers' Union:

We take a moment to reflect upon the vision and mission of Mothers' Union and its continued importance for our world today.

Mothers' Union Vision – a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships which members actively pursue by praying, campaigning and enabling others

and our Mission – to show our Christian faith by the transformation of communities worldwide.

So let us with a heart full of love for our neighbour reaffirm our commitment to the vision and mission of Mothers' Union:

Loving Lord, give us faith to serve you as we follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before.

May we continue to be a people who honour and worship your name.

Lord, make us people of faith.

May we continue to be a people who seek and follow your will.

Lord, make us people of faith.

May we continue to be a people who reach out to the world with your love.

Lord, make us people of faith.

God of every generation, help us, in our time, to continue the work of your great commission.

To gladly share the love of Christ and to build your Kingdom on earth. Amen.

Talk/sharing of stories from Mothers' Union work

Thanksgiving and Intercessions:

We now bring our prayers to God with thankfulness for our heritage and in faith for God's continued leading as we look to the way ahead.

Lord, as we bring to you our petitions we thank you for each other and the joy of journeying together on the path you have called us to walk.

We give thanks for the life and vision of Mary Sumner, and for all who have gone before. For our heritage and shared values, which unite us with members across the world.

We pray for Mothers' Union office holders * both in our own diocese and around the world. Give them discernment and grace to be ever mindful of the needs of those they are called to serve.

We pray for the many Mothers Union initiatives * which build and restore flourishing relationships. Equip our members as they share the love of Christ through acts of compassion and generous deeds.

Today in our Wave of Prayer we pray for the people and work of: * and for the members in our own link dioceses

Lord, we give thanks for your faithfulness. Be with us as we journey onwards together. Guide our steps as we follow your path. May we continue to enrich family life for future generations. Amen.

Symbolic Offering:

Symbols of the various Mothers' Union initiatives may be brought to the front and placed before the altar.

We offer up these symbols of our journeying with Christ.

We pray for God's blessing on every step we take in response to his call. **Amen.**

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.

Final Hymn:

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world where men disown and doubt you,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without you:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us-
self on the cross, and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith © 1969 by Hope Publishing Co

Final Blessing:

God, go with us on our journey of faith – revive us when we grow weary,
direct us when we go astray, inspire us when we lose heart, reprove us when we turn back.
Keep us travelling ever-onwards, a pilgrim people, looking to Jesus Christ who has run the race before us,
and who waits to welcome us home. **Amen.**

Nick Fawcett, Prayers for all Seasons: 1998

We say the Grace together