

Listen, observe, act – in step with God [Service of Thanksgiving] 2019

Welcome and Gathering:

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Service of Thanksgiving. We gather to celebrate the guidance of God in our resolve to make a difference in our world. We gather to affirm our commitment to respond to the needs we have seen and heard; neither running ahead nor lagging behind but always in step with God.

Call to Worship:

The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him.

Psalm 37: 23

Lord, who makes known to us the path of life, we come to worship with thankful hearts.

Let us praise his name together. Amen.

Opening Hymn:

Prayer of Preparation:

Jesus invites us to a way of celebration, meeting and feasting with the humble and poor.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus beckons us to a way of risk, letting go of our security.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus challenges us to listen to the voices of those who have nothing to lose.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus points us to a way of self-giving, where power and status are overturned.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus calls us to follow the way of the cross, where despair is transformed by the promise of new life.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Confession:

Merciful and loving God:

When we are ungrateful, remind us of your grace.

When we are oblivious, open our eyes.

When we are harsh, gentle our spirit.

When we are apathetic, show us your suffering children.

When we demean ourselves, whisper that we are created in your image.

When we lose all hope, show us the empty tomb.

So shape us, and turn us around, that we will live with blessing and grace and light. Amen.

B. M. Neel

Absolution:

May our loving Lord bless us with forgiveness and grace that we may walk the path of life fully in step with God.

Amen.

New Testament Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1: 3, 11–12 [NLT]

³Dear brothers and sisters, we cannot help but thank God for you, because your faith is flourishing and your love for one another is growing. ¹¹So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. ¹²Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honoured because of the way you live, and you will be honoured along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1: 3, 11–12

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Mark 6: 34–43

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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³⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. ³⁵By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. 'This is a remote place', they said, 'and it is already very late. ³⁶Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat'. ³⁷But he answered, 'You give them something to eat'. They said to him, 'That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?' ³⁸'How many loaves do you have?' he asked. 'Go and see'. When they found out, they said, 'Five – and two fish'. ³⁹Then Jesus told them to make all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.

Mark 6: 34–43

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Hymn:

Talk / Sharing of Stories from Mothers' Union work

Thanksgiving and Intercessions:

We now bring our prayers to God for the witness and work of Mothers' Union;
with thanks for his presence with us in all he has called us to do.

Loving Lord, we thank you for the path laid before us and that you accompany us on our journey.

We pray for the flourishing of Mothers' Union as we adapt for the needs of this present age
and entrust ourselves to God to lead us forward.

We pray for open ears, eyes and hearts that we may act with insight and integrity to make a difference in our world.

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

**As we walk into the future with faith may our pace be set by our perfect guide;
neither running ahead nor lagging behind, but always in step with God. Amen.**

Symbolic Offering:

Symbols of the various Mothers' Union initiatives may be brought to the front
and attached to a map or representation of your local community and / or a map of the world.

**As members of Mothers' Union worldwide we offer up these symbols of our love and service.
We pray for Christ's blessing on all we do as we walk in step with God. 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:

Final Blessing:

Remember all God has done. Rejoice in all he is doing. Receive all he shall yet do.

Put your hand in his, the God of past, present and future, and walk with him wherever he may lead,
knowing he will walk with you, this day and always. **Amen.**

Prayers for all Seasons 2; © Nick Fawcett 2001

We say the Grace together

Notes for Service of Thanksgiving:

This service can be used for a Festival Service or for other occasions and may be adapted as required. You may wish to include the Commissioning of Diocesan Officers as part of the service. The updated wording for these can be found on the Mothers' Union website. If a more informal service is wanted, use whichever elements are appropriate to create your act of worship.

Suggestions for hymns and songs:

O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
be thou forever near me, my Master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but Jesus, draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised to all who follow thee
that where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Master and my Friend.

John E Bode [1816–1874]



Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord:
unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name:
make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might:
powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted up.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word:
firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore.

Timothy Dudley-Smith © 1962 Hope Publishing Co



How good is the God we adore!
Our faithful, unchangeable friend:
his love is as great as his pow'r
and knows neither knows measure nor end.

For Christ is the first and the last;
his Spirit will guide us safe home;
we'll praise him for all that is past
and trust him for all that's to come.

Joseph Hart 1759



Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

John Bell © 1987 Iona Community, Govan, Glasgow



When we walk with the Lord in the light of his Word,
What a glory he sheds on our way; while we do his good will,
he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
but his smile quickly drives it away; not a doubt or a fear,
not a sigh or a tear, can abide while we trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, but our toil he doth richly repay;
not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,
but is blest if we trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of his love, until all on the altar we lay;
for the favour he shows, and the joy he bestows,
are for them who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at his feet, or we'll walk by his side in the way;
what he says we will do; where he sends, we will go,
never fear, only trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

John Henry Sammis [1846–1919]



Hope of our calling: hope through courage won;
By those who dared to share all Christ had done.
Saints of today, Christ's banner now unfurled,
We bring his gospel to a waiting world.

Hope of our calling: hope with strength empowered,
Inspired by all that we have seen and heard;
This call is ours, for we are chosen too,
To live for God in all we say and do.

Hope of our calling: hope with grace outpoured,
From death's despair the gift of life restored;
Our call to serve, to wash each others' feet,
To bring Christ's healing touch to all we meet.

Hope of our calling: hope by faith made bold;
To sow God's righteousness throughout the world;
Bring peace from conflict, fruitfulness from weeds,
The kingdom's harvest from the kingdom's seeds.

Hope of our calling: Spirit-filled, unbound,
Old joys remembered and new purpose found,
Our call refreshed by sacrament and word,
We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Lyrics: A Barrett © 2005 Tune: 'Woodlands' W Greatorex [1877–1949]



Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
as Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided –
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided –
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided –
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Lyrics: Thomas Chisholm [1866–1960] Music: William M Runyan [1870–1957]



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Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done, in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
with ever-joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,
the Son, and Holy Ghost, supreme in highest heaven,
the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

Martin Rinkart 1636 [translated by Catherine Winkworth 1858]



One more step along the world I go,
one more step along the world I go;
from the old things to the new
keep me travelling along with you:

Refrain: *And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.*

Round the corner of the world I turn,
more and more about the world I learn;
all the new things that I see
you'll be looking at along with me:

Refrain: *And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.*

As I travel through the bad and good,
keep me travelling the way I should;
where I see no way to go
you'll be telling me the way, I know:

Refrain: *And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.*

Give me courage when the world is rough,
keep me loving though the world is tough;
leap and sing in all I do,
keep me travelling along with you:

Refrain: *And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.*

You are older than the world can be,
you are younger than the life in me;
ever old and ever new,
keep me travelling along with you:

Refrain: *And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.*

Sydney Carter © 1971 by Stainer & Bell Ltd



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



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 [1744]



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.

Ancient Irish translated by Mary Elizabeth Byrne [1881–1931]

Talk / Sharing of Stories from Mothers' Union work:

- * You may like to use the Bible reading of the feeding of the 5000 to focus on Jesus challenging the disciples to answer the needs of the crowd and then using them to play a part in his miracle – including very practical instructions on dividing up the crowd into manageable groups. This can be linked to how he asks us to answer the needs around us at local, national and global level – and is there alongside us to guide and enhance our resources both in practical and miraculous ways!

If you have stories and examples from your diocese' engagement in the MULOA process, including insights from reflecting on God's word together then these would also be good to share along with your thoughts on your way ahead.

Information on the wider Mother's Union and the MULOA process may be found on the website.

Commissioning:

If you are including the Commissioning of Diocesan Officers in the service this would fit well before the thanksgiving and intercessions

Thanksgiving and Intercessions:

- * Include the Wave of Prayer for the day along with your own link dioceses.
Add prayers for your own local concerns and initiatives here as appropriate.
The Lord's Prayer may be added after the intercessions.

Symbolic Offering:

- * You could display a map or representation of your local community and / or a map of the world for symbols of your current and future initiatives to be attached.

Eucharist:

If the service is to include a Eucharist this can be added after your intercessions, along with the sharing of the Peace. You could use this form of words for the Peace or choose your own:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit.