

Listen, observe, act – in step with God [A Service for Lady Day]

Welcome:

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Lady Day Service. As a movement we are seeking to listen to each other and to God, to prayerfully inform our way ahead. So we gather with thankfulness for the inspiration of Mary as she listened and responded in faith to the call of God upon her life.

Call to Worship:

Listening, like Mary, we open our minds

Let us rejoice, God is with us.

Watching, like Mary, as God surprises us

Let us rejoice, God is with us.

Questioning, like Mary, as we engage with the world

Let us rejoice, God is with us.

Pledging, like Mary, to lift up the humble

Let us rejoice, God is with us.

Adapted from the traditional Eastern Orthodox hymn for the Annunciation & Luke 1: 26–28

Opening Hymn:

Confession:

Holy God, you promise to do great things for us,
yet we do not trust you.

You extend your mercy to us,
yet we do not trust you.

You lift up the humble, you fill the hungry with good things,
and yet we still do not trust you.

Forgive us, and help us to trust in the promises you have given us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

The Revd Christine Caton

Exploring the Word: [a dramatised reading of Luke 1: 26–38]

Narrator: In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Gabriel: Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.

Narrator: Mary was greatly troubled at these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Gabriel: Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God.
You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.
He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.
The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,
and he will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.

Mary: How will this be, since I am a virgin?

Gabriel: The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.
Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age,
and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month.
For nothing is impossible with God.

Mary: I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.

Talk/ Reflection:

Faith Response:

**Our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour,
for he looks with favour upon us and sees our unrealised potential.**

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In the tradition of Mary, and all who have said 'yes' to God, we stand here today, to add our assent to theirs.

Like Mary, we feel overwhelmed; we wonder if we are worthy, or capable, of following the calling.

Like Mary, we have our questions and we will not be afraid to ask them.

Like Mary, we will hear and ponder the assurance that God will empower us.

Like Mary we will strive to say – 'Let it be with us according to your will'.

To whatever God is inviting of us at this time in our lives, and relying on God's grace, we say 'yes'. Ann Siddall; © 2018

Hymn:

Prayers of Intercession:

We bring our prayers of intercession in faith; with the words of Mary echoing in our hearts,
that nothing is impossible with God.

Lord of all, you give us a vision through the song of Mary of the way the world ought to be and one day shall be:

a world in which you show the strength of your arm and scatter the proud, in which you bring down
the powerful and lift up the lowly, fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty;

a world of justice, in which good will triumph, evil be ended and the meek inherit the earth.

Give us confidence to believe that day can come and the resolve to make it happen.

Stir the hearts of your people everywhere to work in whatever way possible for change –
to bring the dawn of your kingdom closer and so translate that vision into reality.

Come again to your world, and turn tears into laughter, sorrow into gladness.

In the name of Christ we ask it. Amen.

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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.**

Hymn:

Final Blessing:

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill us with his grace to trust his promises and follow his will;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

Notes for the Service for Lady Day:

Please use and adapt this service to suit your particular setting.

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.

Suggested Hymns and Songs:

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.

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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



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 Greateorex [1877–1949]



This, this is the God we adore,
our faithful, unchangeable Friend;
whose love is as great as his power,
and neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
we'll praise him for all that is past,
and trust him for all that's to come.

The Revd Joseph Hart [1759] Tune: Celeste



From heaven you came helpless babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live

This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

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There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said

This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving

This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

Graham Kendrick Copyright © 1983 Thankyou Music



Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ–light for you
in the night–time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

Lyrics: Richard A M Gillard [b1953] © Kingsway's Thankyou Music
Music: Betty Jane Pulkingham [b1928] The Servant Song



Jesus is king and I will extol Him
Give Him the glory, and honour His name
He reigns on high, enthroned in the heavens
Word of the Father, exalted for us

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We have a hope that is steadfast and certain
Gone through the curtain and touching the throne
We have a Priest who is there interceding
Pouring His grace on our lives day by day

We come to Him, our Priest and Apostle
Clothed in His glory and bearing His name
Laying our lives with gladness before Him
Filled with His Spirit we worship the King

O Holy One, our hearts do adore You
Thrilled with Your goodness we give You our praise
Angels in light with worship surround Him
Jesus, our Saviour, forever the same

Words and Music by Wendy Churchill © 1982 Word's Spirit of Praise Music



When I feel the touch of your hand upon my life,
it causes me to sing a song, that I love you Lord.
So from deep within my spirit singeth unto Thee,
you are my King, you are my God, and I love you Lord.

Ken Jones and Dave Matthews © 1978 Springtide / Word Music [UK]



Lord Jesus Christ you have come to us
You are one with us, Mary's Son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin
pouring Your love and goodness in
Jesus our love for you we sing, living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ now and every day
Teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
this in remembrance Lord of you
Into our lives your power breaks through, living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
Born as one with us, Mary's Son.
Led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free,
living Lord Jesus help us see You are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ I would come to you
live my life for you, Son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
your many gifts will make me new,
into my life your power breaks through, living Lord.

Patrick Appleford [c1958]



God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year:
God is working his purpose out, and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

From farthest east to farthest west, where human feet have trod,
by the voice of many messengers goes forth the voice of God:
'Give ear to me, you continents, you islands give ear to me,
that earth may be filled with the glory of God,
as the waters cover the sea'.

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Let us go forth in the strength of God, with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine throughout the world:
let us all fight with sorrow and sin, to set their captives free,
that earth may be filled with the glory of God,
as the waters cover the sea.

All that we do can have no worth, unless God bless the deed;
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide, till God gives life to the seed;
yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

Arthur Campbell Ainger [1841–1919]



Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley [1707–1788]

Exploring the Word:

This may be shared between three readers.

Faith Response:

If you are including the Commissioning of Diocesan Officers in the service this would fit well after the faith response.

Intercessions:

You may wish to include your own thanksgiving and intercessions here;
also the Wave of Prayer for the day, along with your own link dioceses.