

## In Mary Sumner's footsteps: Service of Thanksgiving

### 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

*Psalm 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**

*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: Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

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

## Gospel Reading: Luke 10:1-9

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

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. <sup>2</sup> He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup> Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. <sup>5</sup> "When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house." <sup>6</sup> If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. <sup>8</sup> "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. <sup>9</sup> Heal those there who are ill and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

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

## Hymn

### **Be thou my vision**

*Irish text; translator Mary Byrne, 1880-1931 & Eleanor Hull, 1860-1935*

## **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**  
*Timothy Dudley-Smith*

### **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*