

In Mary Sumner's footsteps: Service for Mary Sumner Day

Welcome to our Service. We gather to celebrate the life and vision of the founder of Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner, which continues to inspire us as we serve God as a movement in the 21st century.

Mary Sumner was a woman of deep faith, with a heart for prayer and a determination to make a difference in the lives of others. She listened to God and acted upon his call. We too, in our day, want to follow her example as people of faith, by listening and acting upon the call of God.

The plans of the Lord stand firm,
the purposes of his heart through all generations
Psalm 33:11

God of history and eternity,
Lord of every generation,
we come to worship with glad and thankful hearts.
Let us praise his name together. Amen

Opening hymn:
Now thank we all our God
Martin Rinkart, 1586-1649

Opening prayers

**God of the past, the present, and the future,
we have gathered to celebrate and to rejoice:
to give thanks for the life and vision
of our founder, Mary Sumner.**

**As we look to the past with thanksgiving
so we affirm our resolve to build upon this heritage
as we seek to serve God in our generation,
and establish a stable future for those yet to come. Amen**

Collect for Mary Sumner Day

Faithful and loving God,
who called Mary Sumner to strive
for the renewal of family life:
give us the gift of your Holy Spirit,
that through word, prayer and deed
your family may be strengthened
and your people served;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

New Testament Reading: Philippians 1:3-6; 9-11

I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:18-22

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Glory to you, O Lord.

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Hymn:

Great is thy faithfulness

Thomas Chisholm, 1866–1960

Homily

The notes about Mary Sumner's life could be helpful as basis for this

Mary Sumner's Personal Prayer

Written by her in 1876 and then prayed by her every day for the rest of her life

The reading of the prayer may be accompanied by the presenting of symbols portraying the heritage and current work of Mothers' Union. If there is the technology available, you may like to do this as a PowerPoint presentation. The prayer with the additional text could be read by two people, pausing for the offerings to be made/images to be shown. At the end, the congregation may be invited to join in with the collective reading of the prayer

All this day, O Lord, let me touch
as many lives as possible for thee;

Lord, we thank you for the lives touched throughout the years and throughout the world by the members of Mothers' Union

and every life I touch do thou
by thy spirit quicken,

We pray that those whom we serve will experience the reality of your love through our prayers, words and actions.

whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe
or the life I live. Amen

**All this day, O Lord, let me touch
as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch do thou
by thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe
or the life I live. Amen**

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

**Loving Lord,
We give thanks for the far-reaching vision
of our founder, Mary Sumner.
We look back with gratitude for her witness,
and for all that has been achieved thus far
in the name of Mothers' Union worldwide.**

We give thanks for our development and project work.
We pray for all initiatives, large and small,
to transform families and communities.

We give thanks for our influence with governments.
We pray that our campaigns for social justice
will bring lasting change throughout the world.

We give thanks for our members across the globe.
We pray that our membership will flourish and grow
as stories of our work and achievements are heard.

**As we look forward with faith for all that is to come
help us to build a future together
which will enable our work to flourish;
through far-reaching vision
and commitment to your will. 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

Closing hymn:

Hope of our Calling

© Ally Barrett, 2006

Tune: Woodlands

Final blessing

All praise be to God, by whose power
one woman's vision became reality
through the founding of Mothers' Union.

All praise be to God who has led us thus far
and whose Spirit inspires for what lies ahead.

The blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain
with you always. Amen.

United in love across the world,
go in peace to serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Amen