



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 1 January 2017

New beginnings

We thank God that the new year affords us an opportunity to put aside disappointments and difficulties of the year gone by and make a new start in our lives, trusting in God to be with us, whatever lies ahead.

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

At the beginning of this year we pray for God's blessing on members in Lesotho and Swaziland. We give thanks for their ministry to those affected by HIV/AIDS, and pray for them as they support many hospitals and health projects and help their communities to gain access to safe and clean drinking water.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 8 January 2017

Communication

"Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing." (Rollo May, 1909-94, US psychologist) We pray today for relationships where communication has broken down for whatever reason. We ask that there may be willingness from all parties to restore this and to take steps to ensure more openness in the future.

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." (James 1:19)

We give thanks that members in Mauritius and the Seychelles are being successful in communicating the vision of Mothers' Union. We pray that their membership will continue to flourish both in number and engagement.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 15 January 2017

Christian Unity

We thank God for the blessing of those who have become our friends in Christ and pray for the joy of making further precious relationships. Jesus Christ, light of life, unite us together as believers across the world, that we may be a powerful witness of your love in an age of distrust.

"Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." (John 13:34-35)

We pray for Mothers' Union members in Gambia and Egypt. May they know the joy of being united together as they seek to serve their communities. May the love of Christ be evident to all as they work together as one in heart and mind.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 22 January 2017

Shelter

Almighty and merciful God, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own, look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger; who are homeless, hungry and fearful.

"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'" (Psalm 91:1-2)

Lord, we praise you for the work of members in Nigeria to equip people with vocational and spiritual resources. We pray for them as they provide spiritual support through their daily prayers and also practical protection for families and communities.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 29 January 2017

Value of education

Father God, your Son learnt by listening to his elders; please be with our children as they learn from their teachers and parents. We pray that all children will realise their full potential as they grow older and that they will know your love in their lives.

"Apply your heart to what you are taught. Listen carefully to words of knowledge." (Proverbs 23:12)

We give thanks for members in Wales who practically share the love of Christ through their wide-ranging initiatives which help people of all ages and needs. We pray for those who have no access to education, particularly for girls and women, that they will have equal opportunities to be fully independent in the world.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 5 February 2017

Family and friends

Thank you, God, for this new day, and for the blessing of having family and friends. We pray for those who are separated from those they love, and pray that ways may be found for them to be reunited. *"A friend loves at all times, and kinsfolk are born to share adversity."* (Proverbs 17.17)
We pray for the work of MU members in Botswana and thank you for their compassion in caring for those who are orphaned. We pray for their efforts to raise awareness of gender-based violence. May the love of Christ shine through them as they minister in his name.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 12 February 2017

Mission

Lord of the harvest, we pray for an increase of numbers in Mothers' Union, that our mission to give Christian care to families and communities will flourish throughout the world. *"You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work; to go and produce fruit, fruit that will last."* (John 15.16)
We give thanks for members in Burundi as they carry out the mission of Mothers' Union in the midst of challenging circumstances. Burundians have witnessed violence in parts of the country and its impact on family life. In response they have launched a parenting skills programme and are tackling gender-based violence. We pray for their safety and for peace in the country.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 19 February 2017

Prayer and praise

Lord, as we bring you our thanks and praise, we intercede for all who are troubled, in danger or suffering illness or disability. Give us grace to help those we encounter who are in any kind of need. *"Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."* (Psalm 146.1-2)
We pray for MU members in South Sudan whose country has spent much of the last three years in the midst of a civil war. May they find hope in their war-stricken country. We pray that their lives will be filled with praise and that they will know the joy of answered prayer as they strive to build strong communities in troubled times.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 26 February 2017

Fair trade matters

On the World Day of Prayer we add our prayers to those of God's people far and wide, that the voice of prayer may resound clearly throughout the world and our pleas for justice may reach the ear of our loving Heavenly King.
Ash Wednesday: Where our habits reflect our sin and not your love, *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.* Jesus who knew no sin became sin for us. It's never too late to say "sorry" and move on.
We pray for the advocacy work of members in Australia. An ageing membership has not stopped members providing vital care for young people and young parents in need. We pray that their voices will be clearly heard as they support causes of social concern.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 5 March 2017

Valuing Women

Loving Lord, we pray today for all women who live in countries and regimes where their lives are not valued and where opportunities to thrive are limited. Show us how we can play our part in highlighting and changing their circumstances.

“God created men and women to be like himself. He gave them his blessing and called them human beings.” (Genesis 5.1-2) Lord, may women always be valued as those on whom your blessing rests.

Because of the many taboos that surround marriage, members in Cameroon have been running marriage seminars and couples retreats. Work is also being done to empower women financially through business training. We pray for their initiatives in child protection. May young lives be kept safe through their work.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 12 March 2017

Season of Lent

In this season of Lent may we, like Nicodemus, take time to question and challenge our faith, that we may be strengthened and renewed in understanding and more ready to share God's love.

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51.10)

We pray that this season of Lent will be a time of spiritual renewal and refreshment for the women's groups in the Philippines and Uruguay with whom MU is linked. We pray for Episcopal Church Women in the Philippines whose concern is the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as well as human trafficking, and for the Uruguayan Anglican Women's Group which runs social outreach projects to improve family life and give people dignity.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 19 March 2017

International relations

Gracious God, we pray for all politicians and diplomats involved in the complexities of international relations. May wisdom and good judgment prevail in all relationship-building and decision making. We pray that MU will have influence this week at UNCSW as delegates focus on the theme of *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*.

“The Lord will mediate between nations and will settle international disputes... Nation will no longer fight against nation, nor train for war anymore.” (Isaiah 2.4)

We ask today for God's blessing on members in Peru and Bermuda. May the Holy Spirit lead them forward as they plan new ventures in times of change.



Thought for the Week from MU - Sunday 26 March 2017

Role models

On this Mothering Sunday we pray for God's blessing on all who have a mothering role in the lives of children of every age. May they be sustained by God's grace as they look after those entrusted to their care.

“Follow God's example, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5.1-2)

Members in Zambia are role models of peace and stability in communities and the nation, planting seeds for the future and praising the Lord. We give thanks for them and pray that God will use them as good and influential role models as they look to engage with new members and encourage their existing ones.