# 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 21st 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, **2**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. **3**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. **2**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. **3**Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

**4**Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

**5**‘When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house.” **6**If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. **7**Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

**8**‘When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. **9**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*

# In Mary Sumner’s footsteps:

# Notes for Service of Thanksgiving

**This service can be used for a Festival Service or for other occasions**

**and may be adapted as required. If a more informal service is wanted, use whichever elements are appropriate to create your act of worship.**

**You may wish to display examples of Mothers’ Union projects and initiatives down the years at a local, national and international level, including your link dioceses; and information on how to become involved in Mothers’ Union.**

**Extra suggestions for hymns and songs:**

Tell out my soul

Great is thy faithfulness

When I needed a neighbour where you there?

Now thank we all our God

One more step along the world I go

**Talk/sharing of stories from Mothers’ Union work**

Information on the wider Mother’s Union can be found on the website. If your diocese has details of their activities through the years you may like to share these, drawing out common strands between them and current activities.

**Thanksgiving and intercessions**

Please include the names of your own diocesan office holders if you wish, and

specific prayers for your own diocesan projects and initiatives.Also, the Wave of Prayer for the day along with your own link dioceses.

The Lord’s Prayer may be added after the intercessions.

**Symbolic Offering**

You could be creative with this symbolic offering by making paper footsteps on which your initiatives are portrayed. You could also include thoughts about future initiatives in the same way.

**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.*

[*http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/newpatterns/contents/sectionh.aspx*](http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/newpatterns/contents/sectionh.aspx)