

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families



A SERVICE of
*Thanksgiving
and
Celebration*

LICHFIELD DIOCESE
Autumn Council – 13 November 2021

Welcome and gathering

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Service. We gather in gratitude for God's faithfulness over the last while, during the global pandemic, through the loss of our friend and president Sue and for your steadfast faithfulness experienced in the 2019-21 Triennium. We gather to look back, reflect, give thanks and commit to look ahead with fresh vision.

To ask God to transform us personally and spiritually through those experiences as we move forwards together; to transform Mothers' Union, and the churches and communities we work with and of which we are a part.

Call to worship

Let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us come before him with thanksgiving! Thanksgiving for the opportunity to be together; thanksgiving for the life being a Mothers Union member has afforded to us especially during this last Triennium and those who have held office during that time; and especially today for the life, witness and example our friend Sue has shown and shared with us so

We offer these and ourselves to our merciful God -
as an act of true worship.

We ask God to transform us today in heart and mind -
that we may know his perfect will.

Let us praise his name together. **Amen**

Opening hymn

**Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
Urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,**

**Sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.**

**Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us,
Self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
Past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.**

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b1926)

Opening prayer

**Loving Lord, transform our lives
that we may reflect the glory of Christ.
Continue in us the work of your Spirit;
the miracle of transformation
from the gloom of sin
to the glory of Christ
that we may shine with his love. Amen**

Confession

Lord God,
Your love sees failings
and forgives.
Your love feels pain
and wipes away our tears.
Your love knows grief,
and comforts the sorrowful.
Your love sees sin
and still loves the sinner.

**Forgive us when we fail to live
lives that reflect your love.
Forgive us the many times**

**when we take for granted
all that you have done for us.**

Transform us, through your Spirit,
and empower us to serve you
this day and all days. **Amen**

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Reading: Poem by Adie Harris

Hymn:

**As the deer pants for the water,
So my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship you.**

*You alone are my strength, my shield,
To you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship you.*

**I want you more than gold or silver,
Only you can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of your eye.**

**You're my friend and you're my Brother,
Even though you are a king.
I love you more than any other,
So much more than anything.**

Martin J Nystrom (b1956)

Gospel Reading: Luke 19:1-10 read by Rev Chris Rushton

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

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'

⁹ Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.'

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

Talk – Revd Kathy Trimby (leading into Tribute)

Tribute to Sue Egerton – Deb Tudor

Hymn:

**Fill your hearts with joy and gladness,
Sing and praise your God and mine!
Great the Lord in love and wisdom,
Might and majesty divine!
he who framed the starry heavens
Knows and names them as they shine.**

**Praise the Lord, his people praise him!
wounded souls his comfort know;
Those who fear him find his mercies,
Peace for pain and joy for woe;
Humble hearts are high exalted,
Human pride and power laid low.**

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b1926) based on Psalm 147

Activity based on the Giraffe led by Helen Palfrey
(post it notes to be written on and collected in baskets)

Intercessions

Members of our Trustees will lead us in our prayers. To start symbols are shown as they say the first part and then place on a table as they say the second prayer.

1. Lord you have promised to give us
a crown of beauty instead of ashes (*tiara*)
2. the oil of joy instead of mourning, (*a container of
fragrant oil*)
3. a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (*a
colourful scarf*)

1. We pray for transformation
from adversity to blessing –
2. from sadness to joy –
3. from despair to hope –
in our own lives, in our families, in our communities
and in the world.

Verses of the hymn are sung as part of the prayer

**The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.**

***And I will trust in you alone.
And I will trust in you alone,
For your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.***

4 Lord, we thank you for your steadfast love and faithfulness to us all during this last Triennium, for the trails and temptations that have come our way; for the fears and uncertainties during the global pandemic of Covid 19; and the deep sadness of lost members of family, friends, members of our Mothers Union family in the Diocese especially our friend and president Sue, help us as we move on from there, carrying them and what we have learned and gained with us as we move forwards into the future...

**He guides my ways in righteousness,
And he anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,**

I feast on his pure delights.

***And I will trust in you alone,
And I will trust in you alone,
For your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.***

5 We pray for the many Mothers' Union initiatives across the Diocese, in our branches and across the world which help bring about change for good. We pray for the coming Triennium, our newly elected officers and Trustees, our members and all that we will seek to do and build in the name of Mothers Union in this place. We pray for our Link Dioceses across the world, both in Mothers Union and our Diocese of Lichfield. May we always be mindful of our fellow travellers on the road and help each other carry our load, knowing God is with us all always, here and when we journey from this place too into the world and need have no fear

**And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For you are with me, and your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know**

***And I will trust in you alone,
And I will trust in you alone,
For your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.***

Stuart Townend (b1963) based on Psalm 23

Prayers conclude with...

**Loving Lord,
we thank you for your power**

**to bring lasting transformation.
Guide us in your plans
to transform lives for good
wherever you placed us in your world. 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

You shall go out with joy

And be led forth with peace,

And the mountains and the hills

Shall break forth before you.

There'll be shouts of joy,

And the trees of the field

Shall clap, shall clap their hands,

And the trees of the field shall clap their hands

And the trees of the field shall clap their hands

And the trees of the field shall clap their hands

And you'll go out with joy.

Stuart Dauermann (b1944) based on Isaiah 55.12

Final blessing

May all that we are,
everything we think, say and do,
be blessed by God,
constantly renewed
and daily transformed
through his awesome power
and unfailing love. **Amen**

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Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen

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