

ELY DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION

THURSDAY PRAYER

AUGUST 15th 2024

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>

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Welcome everyone to our August Thursday Prayer, focusing on Mary Sumner.

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' [Isaiah 6.8]

Mary Sumner heard this voice, today we celebrate her achievements and thank God for her vision that became Mothers' Union.

**Let's all say Mary Sumner's personal prayer.**

**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**

**BIBLE READING Philippians 1 3-6, 9-11**

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup>constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup>to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup>having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

**MARY SUMNER , BEFORE MOTHERS' UNION**

We know about Mary Sumner establishing Mothers' Union, but you may know little of her early life. "George and Mary Sumner, Their life and times" a book written by Joyce Coombs, gives quite a detailed insight into their family history.

George Henry Sumner was born on July 3rd, 1824. George's father, Bishop Charles Sumner, was a prominent figure at the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837. The Bible on which she took the coronation oath was afterwards presented to Bishop Charles.

George was educated at Eton, then later Oxford.

After leaving Oxford in 1845, George embarked on the "Grand Tour". His cousin, Mrs Wilson and her daughters, had taken a house in Rome for the winter. A Mrs Heywood was doing the same with her daughters. The two mothers called on each other. At a new year's ball George was introduced to Miss Margaret and Miss Mary Heywood.

Mary Elizabeth Heywood was born on December 31st, 1828, the youngest of three children. The three Heywood children spent an idyllic childhood in the green rolling countryside of Herefordshire and each had their own ponies. The children were educated at home, Mary's brother Tom later went to Eton. The days of girls school had not yet arrived. Every year the family went abroad, Mary kept a journal of the places visited and became fluent in French, German and Italian. Mrs Heywood took the two girls to Rome to complete their musical education, perfect their Italian and enjoy the Opera, Mary had ambitions to become an Opera singer, attend concerts and balls. It was at one of these balls that Mary met George.

On July 26th, 1848, George Henry Sumner married Mary Elizabeth Heywood. George's father, the Bishop of Winchester, married them and as the young couple left the church the bells pealed out as they walked on a pathway of scented petals.

The first years of married life was spent at Crawley Hampshire, where George was curate, having been ordained in 1849. They then moved to Farnham so that George could act as chaplain to his father. In 1851 George and Mary moved to Old Alresford Place where they lived until 1885. During that time Mary Sumner's experiences and observations of motherhood and family life led to the founding of Mothers' Union. Mary Sumner conceived the idea of an organization for women, something more than a mothers meeting. It was to bring together all mothers, the rich, talented and elegant, the poor and uninstructed and illiterate. Simple cards, with rules and advice, were given out to those attending the first meeting. Members signed the card and a register was kept. Hence the name arose of enrolling member.

In the early days an organization leaflet gave advice on meetings which happened to include the following:-

It has been found a good plan to provide a general tea before a meeting for all the married women of the poorer classes, and to invite the mothers of the upper and middle classes to assist with that.

It also advised that the hymn " Hark, my soul, it is the Lord" be generally sung at meetings.

After a few years of just local meetings, word spread, to become the organization we know today. The Mothers' Union was born.

I think she would be amazed at what Mothers' Union has achieved since those early days.

## 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 and our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, one God, now and forever. Amen

## PRAYER

Lord of all we give you thanks for the far-reaching vision of our founder, Mary Sumner. We look back with praise and gratitude for her witness and the way she has inspired so many people. Our members worldwide have been beacons of hope for their communities, both with prayer and practical help, bringing joy and reflecting the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We pray that we will be able to continue her vision, ensuring that the role of Mothers' Union will flourish and grow as we unite to be helping hands across the world.

Heavenly Father, we give heartfelt thanks for the years of Mothers Union, for the gathering of women together to be a wave of prayer to take the Love of Christ into their homes and to spread your word to every home. Strengthen and bless all our members around the world as we carry out your mission. Amen

## INTERCESSIONS

Lord, we bring before you the work of Mothers' Union, our worldwide president Sheran Harper and all who work at Mary Sumner house. We pray for our diocesan President Hazel and all involved in the activities, work and branches in the Ely diocese.

We pray for the work of Mothers' Union throughout the world and especially our friends in our link countries of Rwanda, Zambia, Nigeria and India.

We give thanks for the people who came to visit our Banner display, we pray that those who knew little about Mothers' Union, before viewing, went away amazed and inspired.

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We pause for a few moments to bring before you anyone we know who is in need. We pray today especially for the family of Janet Duffy, who was branch leader of Woodston for many years, and whose funeral takes place today.

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Almighty God, we offer these prayers for those who are in need of your mercy; those with broken hearts, broken lives, illness, worry. Bless them with your healing grace, radiate you healing power and fill them with gladness and hope. Amen

**The Mothers' Union Prayer** (say together)

**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. Amen**

**The Thursday Prayer**

**Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

**HYMN**

What Hymn other than the Hymn recommended by Mary Sumner herself, could we sing today than; "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord"

Hark, my soul! It is the Lord,  
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word;  
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee –  
"Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?"

"Mine is an unchanging love,  
Higher than the heights above;  
Deeper than the depths beneath,  
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"I delivered thee when bound,  
And when wounded, healed thy  
wound;  
Sought thee wand'ring, set thee right,  
Turned thy darkness into light.

"Thou shalt see My glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done,  
Partner of My throne shalt be;  
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?"

"Can a woman's tender care  
Cease towards the child she bare?  
Yes, she may forgetful be,  
Yet will I remember thee.

Lord, it is my chief complaint  
That my love is weak and faint;  
Yet I love Thee, and adore,  
Oh, for grace to love Thee more!

**Let's all say the grace,**