

MOTHERS' UNION THURSDAY PRAYER: 20 FEBRUARY 2025

"MU Working with People of All Faiths and None"

ZOOM INFO

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8IuyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>
(MEETING ID: 852 0929 8628 & PASSCODE: 080127)

Good Morning everyone. And welcome to the February Thursday Prayer which is on the theme of "MU Working with People of All Faiths and None".

We will begin with a few **prayers**, followed by singing the **hymn**.

FEBRUARY THURSDAY PRAYER. WE SAY TOGETHER:

ALL: Lord, we hear your word; let us be doers of your will. Christ our Lord, you showed the world your love through actions of mercy as well as words of life. Your practical deeds of kindness are ours to emulate. Your loving model of servanthood is ours to follow. Heavenly Father, help us to follow your ways to enable our work to flourish. May the love of God be seen in us as we live out our faith through action. Amen.

From the MU Annual Prayer Diary for February: "Membership".

We give thanks to you, Lord for our membership in the global Mothers' Union.

May we be blessed with a sense of connection and belonging.

May we accept the call in the power of the Holy Spirit to grow in faith.

May we be empowered in all that we do and say to help others.

May we bloom where you plant us, O Lord. Amen.

Today's Prayer:

Triune God, in your three persons we have all we need as individuals and as Mothers' Union.

Inspire us with creative ways to meet the challenges we face as we mark nearly 150 years of this incredible movement. Amen.

We now sing the hymn: **Brother, sister, let me serve you.**

HYMN:

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey,
And companions on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping;
When you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony;
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant too.

Richard Gillard (1977 Scripture in Song)

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**Reading: Luke 6:27-38**

<sup>27</sup> ‘But to you who are listening I say: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup> ‘If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

<sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

<sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.’

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TALK: “MU Working with People of All Faiths and None”

As I began to think about the subject for this month’s Thursday Prayer, I thought I would start by looking at the Mothers’ Union website, to see where MU was working around the world. We may already know that MU is active in 84 countries. But when I started looking at all the countries represented, I was suddenly aware of how many lives MU must be touching. I thought I would try and pick out some stories of MU’s work, and would focus on our link Dioceses in Africa and India.

In Zambia, our link is with Lusaka. Zambia is located in central Africa, and shares its border with eight other countries. Although some of its neighbours have gone through some very difficult periods in their history, throughout most of its own history, Zambia has remained relatively stable.

Unemployment, trafficking, violence against women, and the economic empowerment of women are all issues affecting family life in Zambia and ones which Mothers’ Union are actively addressing at the local level. There are more than 12,000 MU members across the country acting as agents of change and transformation within communities.

Their many outreach projects include: Church and Community Mobilisation; Campaigning against gender-based violence; Marriage preparation; and Health awareness programmes.

In Rwanda, our link is with Shyogwe. Rwanda is located in central Africa, and is known as the “land of a thousand hills”. During the genocide in 1994 thousands fled into neighbouring countries, but in recent years Rwanda has itself become a safe haven for those fleeing from conflict in DR Congo and Burundi. Today, Rwanda is endeavouring to rebuild and strengthen its economy, with a growing tourism industry and exports of coffee and tea. Mothers’ Union was started in Rwanda in 1966. More than 24,000 MU members across the country are actively engaging in initiatives to transform the lives of individuals, families and whole communities.

Responding to local needs, their projects include: Health awareness programmes; Parenting Programme; Savings and Credit groups; Peace and reconciliation; Marriage preparation and counselling; Support for widows; Sunday School; Addressing gender-based violence; and Vocational skills training.

In Nigeria, our link is with Sokoto & Ikka. Nigeria is located in Western Africa, and is Africa’s most populous country and the seventh most populated country in the world. More than 190 million people live in the country, with an ever-growing population, and more than 250 ethnic groups and over 500 additional indigenous languages. Nigeria is one of Sub-Saharan Africa’s largest economies and relies heavily on oil as its main source of revenue, yet despite this it is estimated that more than 60% of Nigeria’s population still live in extreme poverty. Mothers’ Union has been present in Nigeria for well over 100 years having started in 1908. Conservative estimates of membership numbers start at 60,000 but in reality numbers could be far greater than this. MU is very active in creating opportunities for women and young girls to reach their full potential, working closely alongside the Women’s Guild in each diocese.

Outreach activities include: Hospital visitation; Health clinics; Support for widows and orphans; Day care centres/Nursery schools; Marriage preparation; Vocational training; Orphan care; Prison ministry; and Parenting Programme.

In India, our link is with Karimnagar. With more than 1.3 billion people, the south Asian country of India is the second-most populous country in the world, only outnumbered by China. Despite rapid economic development in the last few decades, India still has high levels of poverty, particularly in rural areas. One of the major problems facing India today is human trafficking, with the United Nations estimating that up to 65 million people in India are affected by human trafficking. Mothers' Union is affiliated with the Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (WFCS) in both North and South India. Members are very active within their local communities reaching out to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, often women and girls.

Their work includes programmes such as: Vocational skills training; Campaigning against gender-based violence; Marriage preparation; and Health awareness programmes.

We remind ourselves of the Vision, Mission, and Aims of Mothers' Union, as written on the MU website.

Vision: MU's Vision is a world where everyone prospers. We actively pursue this vision through prayer and action, helping to build confident people and resilient communities. Our movement seeks to bring about justice, challenge prejudice and advocate change.

Mission: We aim to show our Christian faith by helping the sustainable transformation of communities worldwide. We do this by helping to nurture strong relationships at all levels, promoting peace and reconciliation locally, nationally and globally.

We aim to:

- Encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children.
- Maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.
- Promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.
- Help those whose family life has met with adversity.
- Promote and support married life.

May we continue to uphold these values as we seek to share the love of God and good news of Jesus in our communities, and live lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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**The Theme of the MU FEBRUARY MIDDAY PRAYERS is "Membership".**

The Focus for Thursdays is **"Membership is like a Gem"**.

Please join in the words in **BOLD**.

"Real membership in Christ is like a gem, in that it is precious." (*Beulah McClanahan, adapted*)

"Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her." Proverbs 3:15

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for your unfailing love and the infinite mercy you constantly bestow on us, even when we least deserve it.

† We pray Lord that you grant us...

**ALL:...the humility to realize that everything is possible, only as a result of your enduring grace and mercy.**

† We pray Lord that you grant us...

**ALL:...the wisdom to discern you hold the future, even when we don't know what it holds.**

† We pray Lord that you grant us...

**ALL:...the confidence to remember that you are always in full control in our lowest lows and highest highs.**

† We pray Lord that you grant us...

**ALL:...the faith and understanding that you will never leave your children and that we shall RECEIVE as long as we BELIEVE.**

All of this we ask in the Mighty Name of Jesus. **Amen.** (*Gemina Archer-Davies, Mothers' Union USA*)

**ALL: Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for your unfailing love.**

**May we continue to have hearts of gratitude and share your love with others through our work and service in the Mothers' Union. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.**

**WE PRAY TOGETHER: THE THURSDAY PRAYER.**

**ALL: 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.**

**Our intercessions. We pray for:**

- The worldwide work of the Mothers' Union;
- Kathleen Snow, our Worldwide President;
- Our Chief Executive, Bev Jullien; All who work in Mary Sumner House;
- Our new Board of Trustees; and our Vice-Presidents: Jean, Hazel and Debbie; those leading and serving on the Task Groups of: Faith in Action, Praying our Faith, Finance & Administration, and Communications;
- Our province of Canterbury and Comfort Fearon, our Provincial President;
- Our Worldwide Links: Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnagar in India; Plus Diocesan Links with Kigali & Vellore.

**WAVE OF PRAYER: 19-21 February**

- Free State in South Africa; Bondo in Kenya; Ogbia & Offa in Nigeria; Swansea & Brecon in Wales; Argentina and Uruguay

And in the **Anglican Communion Cycle of Prayer** we remember:  
The Diocese of Maciene - The Anglican Church of Mozambique and Angola  
(Igreja Anglicana de Mocambique e Angola)

**We also pray for:**

- Our local parishes, our families, and our friends, and give thanks for our many blessings.
- Anyone known to us who is in need or unwell.
- The many countries around the world where there are troubles and people are suffering.

~~~ PAUSE FOR REFLECTION ~~~

WE SAY TOGETHER: THE MOTHERS' UNION PRAYER.

ALL: 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

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

**ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen**

We conclude with this prayer of commitment as we go forward on our Christian journey:

ALL: As Jesus taught us, we commit ourselves to welcome strangers into our midst, to care for the poor, to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to support justice in our community. In the name of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit we pledge ourselves to work and pray for peace: Peace in our homes, Peace in our communities, Peace in our world. Amen.

We say THE GRACE ALL TOGETHER.

May The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.