

MOTHERS' UNION THURSDAY PRAYER: 28 NOVEMBER 2024 – “Campaigning for Christ”.

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 November Thursday Prayer which is on the theme of “**Campaigning for Christ**”. We will begin with a few **prayers**, followed by singing the **hymn**.

NOVEMBER THURSDAY PRAYER. WE SAY TOGETHER:

ALL: Righteous God, we embrace our mission to share your love through speaking out for the helpless and campaigning for social justice.

Righteous God, we commit ourselves to campaign for equality and justice for all.

Help us play our part in creating a just and peaceful society for your people on earth.

May hope be stronger than struggle, may celebrations be more frequent than trials, may kindness prevail over judgement, may equality dissolve oppression, may love break walls of hate. Lord, as we go in your name, we celebrate our mission with thankful hearts. Amen.

From the MU Annual Prayer Diary for November: “Women’s equality and empowerment”.

May our championing of women’s equality and empowerment provide women with the means to lift themselves up in their communities; highlighting God’s restoration of human dignity in relationships, based on love and justice, not domination. **Amen.**

This week’s theme: “16 Days of Activism against GBV”.

Lord, we pray that our embodiment of gender equality will understand the place of equity in combatting gender-based violence. Teach us to ensure fairness, equal rights, respect and representation in decision making, and in how we each benefit. **Amen.**

As we think of all the work Mothers’ Union does – bringing hope and light into communities where there are difficulties and darkness – we think ahead to the coming Advent Season, when Jesus came as the light of the world, shining in the darkness and transforming lives.

We now sing the hymn: **Thy hand, O God, has guided.**

HYMN:

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| 1. Thy hand, O God, has guided thy flock, from age to age; the wondrous tale is written, full clear, on every page; thy people owned thy goodness, and we their deeds record; and both of this bear witness; one Church, one faith, one Lord. | 3. Thy mercy will not fail us, nor leave thy work undone; with thy right hand to help us, thy victory shall be won; and then, by all creation, thy name shall be adored, and this shall be our anthem: One Church, one faith, one Lord. |
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2. Thy heralds brought glad tidings
to greatest, as to least;
they bade them rise and hasten
to share the great King’s feast;
and this was all their teaching
in every deed and word;
to all alike proclaiming:
One Church, one faith, one Lord.

Edward Plumptre (1821-1891)
Tune: Thornbury – Basil Harwood (1859-1949)



Reading: Psalm 82

- 1 God presides in the great assembly; he renders judgement among the 'gods':
- 2 "How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked?"
- 3 Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.
- 4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
- 5 "The 'gods' know nothing, they understand nothing.
They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- 6 "I said, 'You are 'gods'; you are all sons of the Most High.'
- 7 But you will die like mere mortals; you will fall like every other ruler."
- 8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.

"CAMPAIGNING FOR CHRIST" TALK

Verses 3 & 4 have been chosen for November Thursday Prayers but I thought it would be good to see the verses in the context of the whole psalm. I'll re-read the two verses:

3 Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

This Saturday we will be having a Vigil and Banner Witness at Ely Cathedral for the UN 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence and domestic abuse, and the MU Rise Up Campaign, which stands for: Respond, Inform, Support, Empower, Unite and Pray. The campaign aims to raise awareness of and call for an end to domestic abuse and gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies in the UK and around the world.

The MU acronym can be expanded as follows about what you should do if someone discloses abuse to you – and more info can be found on the MU's website and other literature.

Respond: Respond to a disclosure of abuse with compassion and calm.

Inform: Inform the person where they can get help. If a person is in immediate danger call 999, otherwise direct them to their county domestic abuse helpline or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline.

Support: Support in a safe manner, listen and believe.

Empower: Empower them to grow and heal.

Unite: Unite the members of Mothers' Union and churches to help end domestic abuse.

Pray: Pray for all affected by domestic abuse.

MU's response could not be more relevant with recent coverage in the media about historical abuse cases.

Bishop Dagmar's pastoral letter included this comment: At times like this, it can be hard to be a committed member of the Church of England. This kind of moral trauma to the church's faithful servants is part of the wickedness of what has happened.

Yet, God has not changed and God's call on us has not changed. When we think of victims and survivors, when we look at the faithfulness of so many in our congregations and communities, we realize they need us to put our hand to the plough, to care and work for a better way. Our only proper response can be a renewed and ever more determined commitment to safeguarding.

So the two verses from Psalm 82 resonate with striking significance:

Defend the weak and the fatherless. Uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

Rescue the weak and the needy. Deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

The title of this month's theme is "Campaigning for Christ". When I think of "Campaigning" it brings to mind our country's recent general election, the election of a new leader for the Tory Party, and the election of a new American president. Everyone involved was keen to make sure voters knew about their mission to win.

This term has seen a new MU Campaign called "Empower Her Literacy". Did you know that 480 million women around the world can't read and write? Despite today's incredible technology, it doesn't make sense that millions of people are illiterate. Millions of adults can't register the birth of their child, read a medicine packet, or apply for a job. They are excluded from so much. Illiteracy doesn't make sense!

We all agree that access to education for children is a fundamental human right. Yet millions of women missed out on an education. The UK government's International Women and Girls' Strategy emphasises

the importance of girls' education, but it doesn't address educating women. MU wants to work with the new government to ensure that they prioritise women's education, regardless of their age.

Perhaps our Campaign or Mission can be summed up in Jesus' "Great Commission" in Matthew 28: 16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

We can't all be out on the "Campaign Trail" – but we can support churches and charities that are working for the spreading of the Gospel and helping those in need. It's not always easy to share our faith with family, friends, and neighbours – but our simple witnessing by our lives and what we say and do can be a blessing to so many. MU Members support so many causes that are helping the needy (like the Refuges, Hostels, Prisons or AFIA Holidays) – whether through donations of goods and knitting, through financial giving, or practical support – but with the underlying message of God's love. We believe Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. As we sang in the hymn: "thy victory shall be won; thy name shall be adored; this shall be our anthem: One Church, one faith, one Lord."

Last Sunday was "Christ the King" and this Sunday is "Advent Sunday". We have Good News to share about the coming of Jesus, our Saviour and King. Let's try and let people know about our Christmas Services and Events. And share the Light of Christ. I hope and pray that everyone enjoys the coming Advent Season and has a Blessed Christmas.

I would like to end with a prayer attributed to Saint Teresa of Avila, which for me expresses quite well how our "Campaigning for Christ" might be lived out.

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours. Amen.

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**The Theme of the MU NOVEMBER MIDDAY PRAYERS is "Women's equality and empowerment".** The Focus for Thursdays is "Opportunities for empowerment".  
Please join in the words in **BOLD**.

"Live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might." Colossians 1:10-11

**LORD, WE WOULD GROW WITH YOU**  
New shoots reaching out, hands stretched upward  
like leaves newly formed, soaking up your light and warmth

**LORD, WE WOULD GROW WITH YOU**  
In sunshine and rain, in darkness and light  
in cold days and summer days, from Springtime to Winter

**LORD, WE WOULD GROW WITH YOU**  
And bring forth fruit, that is pleasing to you  
fed by your living water, giving sustenance to others  
**LORD, WE WOULD GROW WITH YOU. 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;
- Sheran Harper our Worldwide President, and the new WW President, Kathleen Snow;
- Our Chief Executive, Bev Jullien; All who work in Mary Sumner House;
- Our Diocesan President Hazel Williams and Trustees; the Task Group Leaders in: Faith in Action, Praying our Faith, Finance & Administration, and Communications;
- Our province of Canterbury and Kathryn Anderson, our Provincial President, and the new PP Comfort Fearon.
- 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: 26 - 28 November**

- Zululand in South Africa; Lodwar in Kenya; Isiala Ngwa South in Nigeria; Accra in Ghana; Bangor in Wales; and Colombo in Sri Lanka.

And in the **Anglican Communion Cycle of Prayer** we remember:  
The Diocese of Kirinyaga - The Anglican Church of Kenya.

**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.

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**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.**