



Dear Esteemed Clergy,

As the Worldwide President of Mothers' Union (MU), it is my honour and privilege to extend a heartfelt invitation to support and partner our ministry. At MU, we have a rich history and unwavering commitment to fostering faith, family, and community, standing as a beacon of hope and love in today's ever-changing world.

Our mission, deeply rooted in Christian values, is ending violence, injustice, and poverty around the corner and around the world. We strive to bring God's love into the heart of every family and every community, addressing the pressing social issues of our time, providing practical and spiritual support to those who need it most.

We recognise the vital role the clergy plays in the spiritual and communal life of our congregations. Your leadership, guidance, and pastoral care are essential to nurturing the faith and well-being of our members across Britain and Ireland.

I hope this introductory pack provides the essential information you need to know about MU, and the different ways we can work together and support one another. If you are new to MU, we invite you to consider the new church-based membership and contacting your MU diocesan chaplain and diocesan office. We would love you to take that next step in your journey, partnering with an organisation that has been transforming lives for nearly 150 years.

Thank you for your dedication to your vocation. Your faith and service provide comfort and strength. We deeply appreciate all your efforts and the positive impact your ministry has, and we want you to know we are here to support you as the largest network of volunteers in the Anglican Communion. Thank you.

With love and prayers,
Sheran

Sheran Harper, Mothers' Union Worldwide President

Welcome to the Mothers' Union Clergy Pack

We at Mothers' Union (MU) want to thank you for your ministry. MU seeks to support you prayerfully and, where possible, in action.

This pack contains an introduction to MU, plus valuable information on our activities in your diocese. We hope you will find this pack both useful and insightful. **We look forward to working with you, as together, we advance God's kingdom.**

By integrating MU into the life of your parish, you can enhance your pastoral care, enrich your personal and collective worship, and address the contemporary challenges facing families today. This pack encourages collaboration between the clergy and MU members, **reinforcing our shared mission** to nurture faith, uphold family values, and transform communities through acts of love and service.

The MU Clergy Pack is a valuable resource designed to support you in your ministry. We ask that you share these materials with your church leadership team. We are passionate about lay individuals and the ordained joining forces to build God's kingdom.

This pack contains resources to strengthen your ministry which are crafted to align with our core aims:

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

Brief History of Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union was founded in 1876 by Mary Sumner, who was married to an Anglican clergyman and lived in the village of Old Alresford, England. Initially, Mary Sumner set up MU to empower fellow mothers in her parish, believing that **strong families were essential for a stable society.**

We work under three core pillars to help communities transform:



Ending Violence
through peace and
safety work



Ending Injustice
through gender
justice work



Ending Poverty
through increasing
self-reliance and
building resilience

Throughout our history, MU has remained dedicated to our mission to demonstrate our Christian faith by contributing to the sustainable transformation of communities 'around the corner and around the world.' We embody our faith by work to end violence, end injustice and end poverty. Our 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.

We are the largest and oldest women's organisation advocating and working for social justice wherever we see the need in our communities. We are a part of the communities we serve – and have been since 1876. Not only that, but our movement is the largest volunteer-led network in the Anglican Communion. In 2026, we are celebrating our 150th anniversary as a global movement with 4 million members in 84 countries.

Membership is open to all, regardless of gender, age, and marital or parental status. This enables us to impact more lives through our faith, inspired by our founder, Mary Sumner.

As we seek to pray for and support you, would you consider supporting our work here at Mothers' Union?

If you already have a branch or group in your church, we hope you are working in unity with them, your MU diocesan chaplain and local diocese, to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in your church and local community.

If you do not have an active MU branch of volunteer members, we hope you will be inspired in discovering more about who we are and our incredible impact. We are also offering the option to get involved through our **new Church-based Membership** - featured in the section on MU in Britain and Ireland. It is a wonderful opportunity to take that next step and mobilise your church to join us in this journey.

Contents:

- Our Reach and Impact
- MU Global
- MU Britain & Ireland (B&I)
- Sample MU Service outline
- Diocesan Outreach, Contacts, and Information
- Resources

Our Reach and Impact

Mothers' Union is a global Christian movement working with people of all faiths and none to develop communities, strengthen families and advocate for change.

We are active in 84 countries and work tirelessly to serve communities and build a future where everyone thrives.

We are focused on ending violence, ending poverty, ending injustice.

We are transforming lives by:

1. Creating a peaceful and safe environment for all,
2. Fighting for gender justice, and
3. Building individuals' self-reliance.

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, says of Mothers' Union:

“Mothers' Union representatives, in the UK and over 80 countries worldwide, are beacons of hope for so many in the communities they serve. They spread the good news of Jesus Christ, helping with a myriad of practical tasks and being generous with their time and gifts, all to improve the lives of others. I pray that the Mothers' Union will grow in strength and membership; may its work flourish at the grassroots, national and international level.”

MU Global

Through our development work, our Christian values further underpin this commitment to working towards a world that ensures everyone can live life in all its fullness. Our inclusive approach ensures we work with people of all faiths and none, focussing on the most vulnerable. As well as addressing local short-term needs, MU has developed transformational programmes including its adult literacy, kingdom savings, and community resilience work which have been contextualised using participatory listening, learning, and acting principles designed to be locally led solutions to the needs identified.

We are unusual in that all the work is undertaken by members in their own communities, making our impact highly cost-effective and sustainable. We also encourage peer support and learning through province-to-province training, exchange visits and mentoring. Keeping people safe and enabling safe places to learn is a key component of our work ensuring gender equality and safeguarding is woven into all our work.

Here is a snapshot of our impact in 2023:

- We supported over 2.8 million people worldwide.
- We helped transform 569,879 lives around the world.
- Indirectly, we positively affected 2,274,597 lives globally.

- Over 50,000 women were empowered through literacy programmes, skills training, and savings groups in countries including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, South Sudan, and Rwanda.

MU in Britain and Ireland

Membership

- With 36,000 members in MU branches or groups or as individual diocesan members, we remain the largest volunteer network in the Anglican Church in Britain and Ireland (B&I).
- If you already have a group of members in your church, you will know the support they give to you and your church ministry and the difference they make in your local community. Thank you for supporting them and the work of MU in your local diocese.
- If you do not yet have an MU group, why not consider signing up to our new Church-based Membership, a brand-new package of resources we are developing. These will equip you with service plans and resources on family, marriage, and healthy relationships, with training materials for parishioners on discipleship and family life designed to address the challenges and opportunities that we are encountering in the twenty-first century.

In addition, materials will be provided on MU local community outreach programmes including MU projects that help the vulnerable in local communities. For example, MU groups offer life-changing sponsored breaks for families who need them, known as AFIA (Away From It All.) We also support survivors of domestic abuse, we provide tangible support for individuals in prisons and their families, and campaign against modern day slavery and for women's empowerment. There is also the unique opportunity to fundraise for local projects and for our transformative work around the world.

Want to find out more? Contact us at membership@mothersunion.org

Our National Programmes – Faith in Action

Each diocese has a bespoke combination of programmes based on local need and calling. This community work reflects MU's aims to end violence, end injustice and end poverty. Each programme is supported with resources to help volunteers to have a real and deep impact in the communities they serve.

Our National Programmes include:

Domestic abuse (RISE UP campaign) – We equip MU members to support victims and survivors appropriately, encouraging them to know their own local helpline, support services, support local refuge organisations and bring together secular and religious organisations to work towards ending abuse. Every diocese also observes the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence from November each year.

Prison work – We support the families of prisoners and those in prison by running creches and cafes during visitation and “Reading Together” initiatives where books are read simultaneously by child and prisoner. Dioceses aid those leaving prison with packs of essential items, others send Christmas cards to prisoners. Dioceses also commit to praying annually for Prisons Week, in unity with a multitude of other organisations.

AFIA (Away From It All) – Each diocese has their own fund to provide support for families facing adversity, in any form. Some dioceses have their own caravan which can be used by vulnerable families going through tough times, whilst others fund day trips for families.

Modern Slavery – Each diocese is unique in its approach to fighting modern slavery. MU has relationships with, for example, the Clewer Initiative and our members continue to raise awareness that modern slavery is real and happening throughout the UK.

Metamorphosis Bitesize – is a six-session discipleship training course for parishioners, focused on the understanding of transformation in churches and communities. Perfect for small groups, this is available from our online shop. We have just finished a pilot of a wider programme funded by the Church of England, more to follow.

You will find MU volunteers up and down B&I in hospitals, in schools, working with refugees, in foodbanks and working to support clergy in the operation of the church and the delivery of its ministry. We are present in every community, putting our faith into action.

Faith

We assist churches by helping with, amongst other things, Thy Kingdom Come (TKC), Blue Christmas, Baptism and marriage preparation, Sunday school and Messy Church, leading intercessions, or Bible studies. We are on hand to facilitate your TKC engagement with a range of dedicated resources to deepen your faith and outreach. Blue Christmas, also known as "The Service of the Longest Night" is a way of allowing parishioners to reflect on the challenges of the season and acknowledge the difficulties of life, alongside the Christmas message of hope.

To find out how MU members are living out their faith in action in your diocese, check out the diocesan information in this pack.

Community outreach and impact in B&I

- In B&I in 2023, 68,888 benefited from our work in local communities. This includes acts of love and service.
- Dioceses in B&I provided holidays, trips, and outings to over 2,000 children and 1,000 families whose lives have been met with adversity, giving them much-needed respite and the opportunity to make happy memories.
- More than 20,000 items including clothing, bedding, care packages, handcrafted blankets and baby items were lovingly made and distributed by MU members to refugees, the homeless, hospital patients and families.
- We engaged over 15,000 people in awareness raising campaigns, vigils, marches, and outreach on issues like gender-based violence, human trafficking, parenting, relationships, and family life.
- In 2023, we launched the RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse. Working in partnership with our members we ensure that as many churches as possible have information about their local domestic abuse helpline and the help they can provide.

Thank you for engaging with our Clergy Pack. We hope that you are interested in knowing more about how we can support you in your ministry as the largest volunteer network in the Anglican Communion whose work impacts the lives of communities around the corner and around the world.

As a global charity, we are always grateful for support and funding. If you would like to use a Special Collection Sunday to give to our work that would be greatly appreciated.

www.mothersunion.org

membership@mothersunion.org

Mothers' Union, Reg Charity No. 240531.

Mothers' Union's Advent Service 2023

Example Service Plan

Introduction

An opportunity for you to introduce yourself and welcome those gathered. Highlighting that in this Advent service we give thanks for the work of the Mothers' Union worldwide and give thanks for this local branch. Today we will reaffirm our commitment to the Mothers' Union and welcome new members.

Leader: We wait for the coming of Christ, the light of the world

All: **Come Lord Jesus**

Hymn - Christ, be our light!

Light the Advent candle

Call to worship

Reader: We say together the words in bold.

Reader: The true light, which enlightens everyone is coming into the world.

All: **Come Lord Jesus**

Reader: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it.

All: **Christ, shine in your church today**

Leader: We long for the peace of Christ in our world

All: **Come Prince of Peace**

Reader: Listen for the voice of the prophet crying out in the wilderness:
prepare the way of the Lord.

All: **Come Prince of Peace**

Reader: The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him and the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord

All: **Christ, shine on the earth today**

Reader: We wait for the coming of Christ, giving life in abundance

All: **Come Giver of Life**

Reader: The desert shall rejoice and blossom abundantly Rejoice and be glad in it.

All: **Christ, shine in our world today**

Reader: We long for the presence of Christ, Emmanuel, God with us

All: **Come Bearer of Hope**

Reader: Love coming to earth to live among us Full of grace and truth

All: Come Bearer of Hope

Reader: Do not be afraid: see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people

All: Christ, shine in our hearts today

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. ... For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

Hymn of your choice

Second Reading: Psalm 9 ESV

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

² I will be glad and rejoice in you;

I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

³ My enemies turn back;

they stumble and perish before you.

⁴ For you have upheld my right and my cause,

sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.

⁵ You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;

you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

⁶ Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies,

you have uprooted their cities;

even the memory of them has perished.

⁷ The LORD reigns forever;

he has established his throne for judgment.

⁸ He rules the world in righteousness

and judges the peoples with equity.

⁹ The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,

a stronghold in times of trouble.

¹⁰ Those who know your name trust in you,

for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

- ¹¹ Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.
- ¹² For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.
- ¹³ LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,
- ¹⁴ that I may declare your praises
in the gates of Daughter Zion,
and there rejoice in your salvation.
- ¹⁵ The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
- ¹⁶ The LORD is known by his acts of justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.
- ¹⁷ The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,
all the nations that forget God.
- ¹⁸ But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.
- ¹⁹ Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.
- ²⁰ Strike them with terror, LORD;
let the nations know they are only mortal.

Hymn of your choice

Welcome any new members & reaffirm commitments to Mothers' Union
Read Vision, Mission and Objectives of Mothers' Union

Vision

Our 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.

Present any new members and pray together

Wave of Prayer

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.

Scripture reading – from which the address is taken.

Address

Prayers

Lord Jesus, Light of the World

Born in David's city of Bethlehem

born like him to be a king:

Be born in our hearts this Advent

be King of our lives today

Please use this time to bring your own intercessions before the Lord.

Hymn – of your choosing

We go out in God's strength
May God the Father, who loved the world so much
that he sent his only Son,
to come among us in great humility,
open our eyes to look for his coming again.

May God the Son
give us grace to live
in the light of his coming
as redeemer and judge

May God the Holy Spirit
comfort and strength and us
to be light in our families and communities

Closing

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All: In the name of Christ. Amen.