

Mothers' Union Mary Sumner Day Resource Pack 2025



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Introduction

9th August 2025 marks Mary Sumner, a day in which we remember our founder and her vision for our movement. This year, Mary Sumner Day falls on a Saturday.

We have produced this pack of resources and suggestions for how you may want to celebrate and acknowledge the day this year.

We wish you and your members a blessed Mary Sumner Day.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses ...to the ends of the earth. When he had said this...he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight...Then they returned to Jerusalem ... and were constantly devoting themselves to prayer... When the day of Pentecost had come they were all together in one place... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit... and that day about three thousand persons were added."

Acts 1, 2

Mary Sumner Day Service 2025

[Mary Sumner Day service 2025.pdf](#)

Mary Sumner Day Member Prayers

A selection of prayers, collected from members around the world in recent years, in honour of Mary Sumner Day

Gracious God,

On this Mary Sumner Day we give thanks for all the blessings that Mothers' Union has brought to our members worldwide. We thank you for calling your servant Mary Sumner to be the founder of the Mothers' Union. We give thanks for all who attended the first meeting in Old Alresford, for their prayers and dedication to upholding family life. We pray that we the members now will continue to follow in their footsteps, enabling and strengthening family life through love and fellowship in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Stella Roberts, Diocesan President of Winchester Diocese, UK

Lord of all,

We give 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.

Amen

Daphne Burton, Diocese of Chichester, UK

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for all the good things you do for us and for building our Mothers' Union family.

We ask you to keep guiding us and increasing our numbers in all the countries where Mothers' Union has a presence and those where we are not yet represented.

We ask you to strengthen existing members that they should not tire of serving you

but be empowered so that our presence will be felt and will help our church and communities.

We pray for our Mothers' Union leadership in all countries, and we ask all this through your son Jesus Christ.

Amen

Priscilla Mphande, Mothers' Union Malawi (adapted)

LIVING LORD

You are the light of the world.

We light out candles in prayer.

As you guide us into the future

We offer our hands to work for all.

Our hearts to care for all.

Our voices to speak to all.

We lay our prayers at your feet.

LIVING LORD.

Amen.

Kathleen Wilson, Diocese of Durham Diocese

Father, guide and give wisdom to our Worldwide President and all those who hold leadership positions in Mothers' Union as they plan for the future and sustainability of this great organisation.

Father, we earnestly knock on your door, asking you to send your Holy Spirit into Mothers' Union; fill us with your Spirit, re-energise us, re-enthuse us daily as we work in your field.

Father, our vision is of a world where everyone will experience your love, and we look to you to make that a reality.

We ask this with hearts full of gratitude, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen

Frida Sakala Kazembe, Lusaka, Zambia

The Story of Mary Sumner



It all started when Mary, married to George, Rector of the Parish of Old Alresford, was passionate about transforming the home-lives of Parish families, by helping the women to support one another in raising their children.

Her husband was very supportive: “just share your heart – God will do the rest.”

She was so nervous at the first meeting of the parish women, that she refused to speak, and asked George to take her place. In those days, it was very unusual for a woman to be a public speaker. However, George encouraged her to speak from the heart, and it went so well that she found the courage to speak at future meetings. Her talks were inspired by her faith – it was practical and down to earth – “Remember, Ladies, to be yourselves what you would have your children be.”

After groups with women became well established, she was asked to speak to the men of the Parish. Again, she was apprehensive, but agreed, and helped them to be more aware of what their wives did for them, to show more respect and love.

The meetings grew, and included women - old and young, rich, and poor. Others heard about her work and started groups in their own areas.

In 1876, she founded “the Union of Mothers” – with a membership card and promise: “to be given up, body and soul, to Jesus Christ in Holy Baptism, and that your duty is to train your children for his service”.

In 1885, at a time when it was still unheard of for women to speak to large audiences, Mary Sumner was invited by the Presiding Bishop to speak to a packed church congress session for women in Portsmouth. He anointed her with the authority to speak - he felt that he had no authority to speak to a group of women whose prime concern was to get enough food on the table so that the children would not starve. She overcame her nerves again. “Together, by the Grace of God... we can calm each other when we are afraid; strengthen one another when we are weak; and work together to raise our children to the glory of God. Unity is strength.”

The movement grew further, increasingly with the support of bishops, internationally as well as in England. Some key principles were developed, including:

That the prosperity of a nation springs from the family life in its homes

That family life is the greatest institution in the world for the formation of the character of children.

That faith is the foundation of family life.

That the tone of family life depends upon the married life of the parents – and ultimately, that example is stronger than precept.

As the movement continued to grow, Mary Sumner asked herself what its purpose really was, and what it should strive for. She reflected: “A true home should be a light-house, shedding its quiet beams far and wide” – her dream was for every home to be filled with the light and love of Jesus, and for the movement to unite many hearts in many lands, nurturing healthy environments for little children.

And she was a living example of what she preached. From 1900 onwards, she and the members started to advocate on issues of key importance to families and children – she campaigned to stop children collecting alcohol from public houses for their families, and for the age of marriage for girls to

be raised from 12 to 16. She was not afraid to speak up on difficult issues, despite resistance from members of the establishment.

She was also not afraid to act outside the social norms, to do what she believed to be right. At a time when unmarried girls with children were condemned and cast out, she cared for and protected her niece and her illegitimate son.

When she died in August 1921, 4,000 women attended her funeral, which was a service of Thanksgiving. The last memory was one of her, on her feet in the sunlight, praising God.

She could not have conceived how the seeds which she planted would grow into a movement 4 million strong today, of members in 84 countries putting their faith into action to nurture healthy relationships in families and communities and to fight for social justice.

The 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

The Mary Sumner 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.