# MU service for Mothering Sunday 2021: Togetherness

## *This service may be used by individuals, or adapted to suit a group setting, dependent on current guidelines.*

On Mothering Sunday, many of us thank God for the women who have had the greatest impact on our lives, and celebrate their unconditional love and sacrifice.

For others, however, Mothering Sunday brings mixed emotions, and it can take

real tenacity and trust in the Holy Spirit to give love and to feel loved.

So, in this service we remember before God families of all kinds, as they navigate

the joys and challenges of family life, and ask for his blessing upon them.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,

that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! *1 John 3:1*

We draw near in worship to our heavenly Father, with full and thankful hearts,

that we belong to his family and are all equally loved by him. Amen

## Hymn

## Opening prayers

Wherever we are, we live in God's family.

When our families are broken by circumstance and pain,

He reaches out to hold us in His arms, piece by piece

He makes us whole again,

and in His love-filled hands we are transformed.

So Lord, help us to build relationships

in all the corners of our hearts.

To be like you, to love like you,

to heal brokenness and restore wholeness

in families worldwide. Amen

## Bible readings

**Isaiah 40:11**

God tends his flock like a shepherd:
he gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

**Ephesians 3:14-19 (GNT)**

I fall on my knees before the Father, **15**from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. **16**I ask God from the wealth of his glory to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, **17**and I pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love, **18**so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love. **19**Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God.

## Talk

*If you are following this service at home, at this point you may like to read Rosa’s story in your MAMD catalogue and letter, and thank God for his provision for this family through the work of Mothers’ Union.*

For 10-year-old Rosa and her grandmother Wendy, Mothering Sunday has often brought quiet tears of sorrow. Rosa’s late mother, Mallow, had spent years battling with alcoholism, so Rosa had gone to live with Wendy (69) and her husband (72). They tried everything they could to help Mallow, but she sadly passed away.

Our Mothers’ Union AFIA breaks gave Wendy and Rosa the opportunity to rest and find some peace. And also to meet other people who had struggles in their own lives, so together they could talk openly, honestly and in safety. Today, Wendy and Rosa are continuing on their lifelong journey, but now they are no longer alone.

## Reflective prayer

*We take a moment after every section to bring our own response to God and to remember those we know for whom it is particularly relevant.*

God of celebration, who rejoices with those who rejoice,

we pray for those for whom Mothering Sunday

is a time of thanksgiving and joy.

God of compassion, who weeps with those who weep,

we pray for those for whom Mothering Sunday

is a time of heartache and pain.

God of community, who calls the children to come to him,

we thank you that your love abounds

for families of every kind.

God of comfort, who gathers us as a hen gather its chicks,

we thank you that your love surrounds

the disappointed and hurt.

God of every circumstance, we bring our thanks and praise

that we belong to your family

as your beloved children. Amen

## Hymn

## Final blessing

May the love of the Father fill our hearts;

May the love of the Lord Jesus fill our homes;

And may the grace of the Holy Spirit

bind us together in love in our families and communities.

And may the blessing of God be with you,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

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