

Join Us, Join In – celebrating our 150th anniversary year

A Service for Lady Day (25th March)

Welcome

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Lady Day Service. This can be adapted to suit your local needs by omitting or choosing hymns etc. MU members can support their clergy by offering the service and supporting it as readers, intercessors etc.

As a movement we are celebrating our 150th anniversary year, giving thanks for Mary Sumner's vision, and seeking to grow in number and in reach, being the hands and feet across the world. So we gather with thankfulness for the inspiration of Mary as she listened and responded in faith to the call of God upon her life.

Call to worship

Listening, like Mary, we open our minds
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Watching, like Mary, as God surprises us
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Questioning, like Mary, as we engage with the world
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Pledging, like Mary, to lift up the humble
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Adapted from the traditional Eastern Orthodox hymn for the Annunciation & Luke 1:26-28

Opening hymn

Confession

Holy God, you promise to do great things for us,
yet we do not trust you.

You extend your mercy to us,
yet we do not trust you.

You lift up the humble,
you fill the hungry with good things,
and yet we still do not trust you.

Forgive us, and help us to trust
in the promises you have given us.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

Rev. Christine Caton

Exploring the Word – a dramatised reading of Luke 1:26-38 *

Narrator: In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Gabriel: Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.

Narrator: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Gabriel: Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.'

Mary: How will this be, since I am a virgin?

Gabriel: The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.

Mary: I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.

Talk/ Reflection

Faith response *

Our souls magnify the Lord,
and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour,
for he looks with favour upon us
and sees our unrealised potential.

In the tradition of Mary,
and all who have said "yes" to God,
we stand here today,
to add our assent to theirs.

Like Mary, we feel overwhelmed;
we wonder if we are worthy,
or capable, of following the calling.

Like Mary, we have our questions
and we will not be afraid to ask them.

Like Mary, we will hear and ponder
the assurance that God will empower us.

Like Mary we will strive to say -
"Let it be with us according to your will."

To whatever God is inviting of us
at this time in our lives,
and relying on God's grace,
we say "yes."

Ann Siddall; ©2018

Hymn

Prayers of intercession *

We bring our prayers of intercession in faith; with the words of Mary echoing in our hearts, that nothing is impossible with God. You may also add your own intercessions for the celebrations within your local MU and how you are inviting others to 'Join Us, Join In'.

Lord of all,
you give us a vision through the song of Mary
of the way the world ought to be
and one day shall be:

a world in which you show the strength of your arm
and scatter the proud,
in which you bring down the powerful
and lift up the lowly,
fill the hungry with good things
and send the rich away empty;

a world of justice,
in which good will triumph,
evil be ended
and the meek inherit the earth.

Give us confidence to believe that day can come

and the resolve to make it happen.

Stir the hearts of your people everywhere
to work in whatever way possible for change –
to bring the dawn of your kingdom closer
and so translate that vision into reality.

Come again to your world,
and turn tears into laughter,
sorrow into gladness.
In the name of Christ we ask it. Amen

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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

Hymn

Final Blessing

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace
to trust his promises and follow his will;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen

Notes for the service for Lady Day

Please use and adapt this service to suit your particular setting.

Suggested hymns and songs:

Tell out my soul
Hope of our calling
This, this is the God we adore
From heaven you came, helpless babe
Brother sister let me serve you
Jesus is king and I will extol Him
When I feel the touch of your hand upon my life
Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
God is working his purpose out
Love divine, all loves excelling

* Exploring the Word

This may be shared between three readers, or replaced with a simple reading of the Gospel reading for the day (Luke 1:26-38).

* Faith response

If you are including the Commissioning of Diocesan Officers in the service, this would fit well after the faith response.

* Intercessions

You may wish to include your own thanksgiving and intercessions here, also the Wave of Prayer for the day, along with your own link dioceses.