

Mothering Sunday – Order of Service

This service can be adapted to suit your particular setting. If a more formal service is required, then use whichever elements are appropriate.

Theme: The gift of belonging

Mothering Sunday stirs deep emotions for many of us: gratitude, love, remembrance, and sometimes sorrow. Around the world, there are teenage mothers who long for the comfort and protection of family yet find themselves utterly alone at the moment they need love most. On Mothering Sunday, we praise God for his constant love and sense of belonging, and give thanks for those who mother and care, persevering through the ups and downs of family life. We also give thanks for the support Mothers' Union gives to those who need hope, dignity and the support of God's love in action.

Call to Worship

And the Spirit himself joins with our spirits to say that we are God's children.
Romans 8:16

The spirit of God calls us from many places;
some of us come from busy homes with many people
some of us live alone.

We are a part of the family.

This week has been different for each of us;
some of us have had happy news we want to celebrate
some of us have faced grief and need to cry.

We are members of God's family.

Yet we all come to this same place;
all of us seeking God's presence in our lives
all of us seeking God's presence with each other.

Together we become God's family.

Hymn*

Collect for Mothering Sunday:

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Bible Reading(s):

Old Testament: Exodus 2:1-10 *or* 1 Samuel 1:20-28

Psalms: Psalm 34:11-20 *or* Psalm 127:1-4

New Testament: 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 *or* Colossians 3:12-17

Gospel: Luke 2:33-35 *or* John 19:25b-27

Reflection:

Throughout our readings today we can find the theme of belonging. We hear about mothers in different and challenging situations as well as hearing about God's character, who provides endless comfort and to whom we belong. We are encouraged to be people who follow God's example and help others ourselves. By sharing the gift of belonging, rejection can be turned into strength, and despair into hope.

In the Make a Mother's Day 2026 letter we read Grace's story about how she was brought into an MU community support programme and received guidance, faith-based counselling, and practical help to care for her child, and to help other young mothers. Whatever circumstances families face, and whatever the reasons for them, we know that God is there with open arms when we turn to Him, ready to belong. We pray that we will be willing to be part of his provision for others as He shows us the way.

Reflective Prayer: Candle Lighting Litany

Five candles are needed, which can be lit by the same person, or different people. We take a moment after each candle is lit to bring our own response to God and to remember the people we know for whom it is particularly relevant.

The first candle is lit.

Nurturing God, we light this candle in recognition of the great care and love you have for each one of us.

Nurturing God, we praise and thank you.

The second candle is lit.

Nurturing God,
we light this candle in thanksgiving for all mothers,
for all they do, or once did,
for all they give, or once gave
and for all they mean and will always mean.

Nurturing God, we praise and thank you.

The third candle is lit.

Nurturing God,
we light this candle for all families throughout the world.

Nurturing God, we praise and thank you.

The fourth candle is lit.

Nurturing God,
we light this candle for the family of the Church,
here and everywhere.

Nurturing God, we praise and thank you.

The fifth candle is lit.

Nurturing God,
we light this candle for all who nurture and encourage others.

Nurturing God, we praise and thank you.

Hymn*

Benediction

Go into your week,
knowing that you are embraced by the love of God;
a love that is sweeter and more tender
than any you have ever known.

Amen

Blessing

May the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit, strengthen us for the Christian life.
May the Lord who provides for all our needs sustain us day by day.
May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care, send us out to live and work for others.
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always.

Amen

Acknowledgements

Call to Worship: Katherine Hawker
Candle Lighting Litany: St. Cyprian's Scottish Episcopal Church
Benediction: Copyright Carol Penner www.leadinginworship.com

Suggested Hymns*

All our blessings (words by Revd Ally Barrett - reverendally.org)
Be still for the presence of the Lord
Bind us together, Lord
Brother, sister, let me serve you
For those who give us life and breath (words by Revd Ally Barrett - reverendally.org)
For the beauty of the earth
Now thank we all our God