

Building hope and confidence: Service of Thanksgiving

Welcome and gathering

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Service of Thanksgiving.
"Building hope and confidence" is at the heart of our call to support individuals and families to transform their lives. So we gather to celebrate our hope and confidence in God, which inspires and equips us to build hope and confidence in others, as we reach out in love and service.

Call to worship

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3

Lord of all, we gather together
with hope and confidence in your great mercy,
to bring our worship with thankful hearts.

Let us praise his name together. Amen

Opening hymn

Prayer of preparation

Living God,
we thank you that we can put our hands in yours,
and walk where you will lead us,
confident that, though all else may fail, you will not,
though heaven and earth pass away,
your words will endure forever.

**So we come in faith,
with joyful hearts
and in glad thanksgiving,
to offer our worship,
and to dedicate our lives
once more to your service.**

You have given us hope,
and hope does not disappoint us.

**Receive our praise,
in the name of Christ. Amen**

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Confession

**Merciful Lord,
forgive us when we shun the security
of your eternal promises
and build our hope and confidence
on the shifting sands of this world.**

**Lord of steadfast security,
help us to anchor our lives on you
that we may place our confidence
in your unfailing word
and build hope that endures
in those you call us to serve. Amen**

Absolution

May our loving Lord bless us
with forgiveness and grace
that we may be renewed
in hope and confidence
to gladly serve his world. **Amen**

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 3:1-6

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. ² He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. ³ Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself. ⁴ For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵ 'Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house,' bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. ⁶ But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: John 14:6-7; 12-16

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. ¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Hymn

Talk/sharing of stories from Mothers' Union work *

Thanksgiving and intercessions

We now bring our prayers for the witness and work of Mothers' Union; placing our hope and confidence both in God's willingness to hear and in his power to answer.

**God of sure and steadfast hope
we draw near with confidence
to ask for your blessing
on the witness and work of
Mothers' Union worldwide.**

We bring you our thanks for lives
which have been transformed
as we have reached out with your love;
for those who now face the future
with hope and confidence.

We pray for the many who still
despair that life can ever change
and ask for your abundant resources
to transform mind-sets and circumstances
and create a hopeful future.

Today in our Wave of Prayer we pray for the people and work of: *
and for the members in our own link dioceses...

**God of sure and steadfast hope
we look forward with confidence;
trusting in your loving guidance
as we continue to walk in step with you. Amen**

Sure and steadfast hope symbolic prayer*

Card or paper anchors on which are written local and global Mothers' Union initiatives supported by the Diocese may be brought to the front; their content read out and then fixed to either a prayer tree, a local or global map or a representation of God's faithfulness e.g. a cross or a rock

God's promises should greatly encourage us to take hold of the hope that is right in front of us. This hope is like a firm and steady anchor for our souls.
Hebrews 6:18-19 (CEV)

**We offer up these symbols
of our sure and steadfast hope in God.
We affirm our confidence in his promises
and commit our witness and work to him. Amen**

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**

Final Hymn

Final blessing

Whatever today may hold,
whatever tomorrow might bring,
the future is secure,
for Christ is with us,
the same yesterday, today and forever.
Live each moment with him
in quiet confidence and joyful celebration,
for he is ours
and we are his
for all eternity. **Amen**
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May the God of hope fill us with joy and peace
as we trust in him, that we may overflow with hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Notes for Service of Thanksgiving

**This service can be used for a Festival Service or for other occasions
and may be adapted as required. If a more informal service is wanted,
use whichever elements are appropriate to create your act of worship.**

Suggestions for hymns and songs

Hope of our calling
Great is thy faithfulness
In Christ alone my hope is found
My hope is built on nothing less
Standing on the promises of Christ my King
Lord for the years
I, the Lord of sea and sky
Lord Jesus Christ (Living Lord)
Will your anchor hold
From heaven you came (The Servant King)
Oh Lord, all the world belongs to you

Talk/sharing of stories from Mothers' Union work

*You may like to link the New Testament reading, which affirms our heavenly calling and hope and confidence in the promise of Christ's faithfulness to us (his house) with the Gospel reading, which sets out Christ's promises about the work he calls us to do, and the help he will provide for us.

We can trust in all God's promises, which Hebrews 6:18-19 confirms to be the basis for our hope and confidence.

If you have stories and examples from your diocese' initiatives, in particular how hope and confidence is being built in the lives of those they support, it would be good to include these here - and maybe link them with relevant promises of God.

Information on the wider Mother's Union may be found on the website.

Thanksgiving and intercessions

*Include the Wave of Prayer for the day along with your own link dioceses. Add prayers for your own local concerns and initiatives here as appropriate. The Lord's Prayer may be added after the intercessions.

Symbolic Offering

* See anchor outline below

Eucharist

If the service is to include a Eucharist this can be added after your intercessions, along with the sharing of the Peace.

You could use this form of words for the Peace or choose your own:

Jesus says to his disciples, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid.'

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/common-material/new-patterns-worshp/resource-section-themes/h-peace>

