

Transformation – Now!

Service of Thanksgiving

Welcome and gathering

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Service. We gather in gratitude for God's faithfulness over the last year. We gather to look ahead with fresh vision. To ask God to transform us personally and spiritually; to transform Mothers' Union, and the churches and communities we work with and of which we are a part.

Call to worship

Let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us come before him with thanksgiving!

We offer ourselves to our merciful God -
as an act of true worship.
We ask God to transform us in heart and mind -
that we may know his perfect will.
Let us praise his name together. **Amen**

Opening hymn

Opening prayer

**Loving Lord, transform our lives
that we may reflect the glory of Christ.
Continue in us the work of your Spirit;
the miracle of transformation
from the gloom of sin
to the glory of Christ
that we may shine with his love. Amen**

Confession

Lord God,
Your love sees failings
and forgives.
Your love feels pain
and wipes away our tears.
Your love knows grief,
and comforts the sorrowful.
Your love sees sin
and still loves the sinner.

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**Forgive us when we fail to live
lives that reflect your love.
Forgive us the many times
when we take for granted
all that you have done for us.**

Transform us, through your Spirit,
and empower us to serve you
this day and all days. **Amen**
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New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:7-8, 15-18

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?

¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

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

Gospel Reading: Luke 19:1-10

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

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'
⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'
⁹ Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.'

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

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Hymn

Talk/sharing of future vision and plans *

Intercessions

Three people to pray. Each hold out an appropriate symbol as they say the first part and then place on a table as they say the second prayer.

1. Lord you have promised to give us
a crown of beauty instead of ashes (*a crown, tiara or flower garland*)
2. the oil of joy instead of mourning, (*a jug or other container of fragrant oil*)
3. a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (*a colourful scarf or wrap*)

1. We pray for transformation
from adversity to blessing –
2. from sadness to joy –
3. from despair to hope –
in our own lives, in our families, in our communities and in the world.

We pray for the many Mothers' Union initiatives across the world which help bring about change for good. In particular, we pray for.... (*You could pray here for your own Diocesan projects and outreach; also for your link Dioceses.*)

**Loving Lord,
we thank you for your power
to bring lasting transformation.
Guide us in your plans
to transform lives for good
wherever you placed us in your world. 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**

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Final Hymn

Final blessing

May all that we are,
everything we think, say and do,
be blessed by God,
constantly renewed
and daily transformed
through his awesome power
and unfailing love. **Amen**
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Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in
Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! **Amen**

Notes for Service of Thanksgiving

This service can be used for a Festival Service, or for other occasions, and adapted as required. If a more informal service is wanted, use whichever elements are appropriate to create your act of worship. You may wish to include the Commissioning of Diocesan office holders as part of the service. The wording for these are on the MU website.

Suggestions for hymns and songs

O for a thousand tongues
All for Jesus, all for Jesus
Praise to the Lord the Almighty the King of creation
Hope of our calling © *Ally Barrett, 2006*
Be still for the presence of the Lord *David J Evans © 1986 Thankyou Music*
I am a new creation *Dave Bilbrough © 1983 Thankyou Music*
He gave me beauty for ashes *Robert Manzano © 1979 Thankyou Music*
Give thanks with a grateful heart *Henry Smith © 1978 Integrity Hosanna! Music*
Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us *Patrick Appleford © Josef Weinberger Ltd*

Talk/sharing of your diocese' vision and plans for the next triennium

*You may like to use the story of Zacchaeus' transformation as a basis for a talk e.g.

- We were all like Zacchaeus once, focused on self, maybe to the detriment of others. Jesus sought us out and his love and acceptance changed us completely.
- Zacchaeus found it hard to see Jesus. Which individuals or groups of people are we aware of whose view of Jesus is blocked? How can we help them to encounter him?

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- It would be good to share any stories of transformation from your initiatives and informal acts of service.
- If anyone would like to share their own story of personal transformation by Jesus that would be a great encouragement and inspiration for all. If you are including the commissioning of officers in the service one or more may like to share how Jesus called them to the role.

Ideas for a display or offering of thanksgiving

You may like to include a creative way of thanksgiving as part of your service.

As people arrive, hand out butterfly shaped pieces of different coloured paper (suggested template below) on which to write one thing God has changed in their life for which they are thankful. (This could be external circumstances or internal e.g. peace instead of anxiety.) Some ideas for their use:

Display them together at the front in a large basket. (Or if you use butterfly-shaped post it notes they can easily be fixed to a wall, a cross, or a board.)

Read out some in a time of thanksgiving which ends in prayer together -

A group of butterflies is called a kaleidoscope.

**God of glory,
we offer to you our kaleidoscope of praise
for your transforming work in our hearts and lives. Amen**

Or collect them in baskets during a hymn and bring forward as part of the offertory.

