

**SOWING THE FUTURE TOGETHER:
TOGETHER WE GROW**

This Service may be used as a Eucharist, or for a general service on the 2014 theme. Choose from the hymn suggestions below or add your own appropriate hymns.

THE GATHERING

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
Psalm 118:22-23

THE GREETING

The Lord is with us
Let us praise his name together.

WELCOME

Welcome to our service.
We gather to give thanks for the work of grace in our lives, which has founded us
on Christ and is building us together in love, to gladly serve the purposes of God.

Loving Lord, we draw near to you with grateful hearts. **Amen**

Opening hymn:

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

We say together:

**Loving Lord, found us deeply in Christ
that together we may grow in love and faith
to build your kingdom on earth.**

Guide us in prayer
to seek your ways for meaningful growth.
Fill us with strength
to follow your plans for valuable service.

**Help us to build a future together
which will enable our work to flourish;
through far-reaching vision
and commitment to your will. Amen**

CONFESSION

**Most merciful God,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and build us in godliness. Amen**

ABSOLUTION

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Old Testament Reading: Exodus 5:10-17

Then the slave drivers and the overseers went out and said to the people, “This is what Pharaoh says: ‘I will not give you any more straw. ¹¹ Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.’” ¹² So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. ¹³ The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, “Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw.” ¹⁴ And Pharaoh’s slave drivers beat the Israelite overseers they had appointed, demanding, “Why haven’t you met your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?”

¹⁵ Then the Israelite overseers went and appealed to Pharaoh: “Why have you treated your servants this way? ¹⁶ Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, ‘Make bricks!’ Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people.”

¹⁷ Pharaoh said, “Lazy, that’s what you are—lazy! That is why you keep saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’ ¹⁸ Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-7

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

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

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:42-45

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

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:
“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes’
⁴³ “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and
given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be
broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”
⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was
talking about them.

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

HOMILY:

Pause for silent reflection

We say together
THE APOSTLES’ CREED
I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried
He descended into hell.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen

SYMBOLIC OFFERING TO GOD

Depending on the context of the service there may be a symbolic offering of plans for the year brought up and laid before the altar. This idea may be adapted to fit specific occasions.

Intercessions:

Loving Lord

we offer to you our plans for the future of Mothers' Union. *Specific names of Dioceses etc may be added.* Build us together as living stones; united in love and founded on Christ.

We pray for marriage and family life:
Use us to build relationships
which will flourish and grow
in a world where attachments
too easily falter.

We pray for the poor and oppressed:
Use us to challenge social injustice
with a clear voice
in a world where the vulnerable
strive to be heard.

We pray for those in adverse conditions:
Use us to work in partnership
with mutual respect
to share God's resources
with those in need.

Loving Lord

we offer to you our prayers for the future of Mothers' Union. *Specific names of Dioceses etc may be added.* Build us together as living stones; for the growth of your kingdom and the glory of Christ. Amen

Wave of Prayer for Mothers' Union

Lord, we pray for Mothers' Union worldwide.
Today we pray for the people and work of:

Add the appropriate names from the wave of prayer.

We pray for all members.
May God be with them
in every part of their lives,
encouraging them and leading them,
sheltering and strengthening them
So they may work to your praise and glory. **Amen**

THE 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 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. Amen

Offertory Hymn:

Preparation of the Table and Eucharistic gifts.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you
and also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
we lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, Lord God,
our light and our salvation:
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the beginning you have created all things
and all your works echo the silent music of your praise.

In the fullness of time you made us in your image,
the crown of all creation.
You gave us breath and speech,
that with angels and archangels and all the powers of heaven
we may find a voice to sing your praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord.
As a mother tenderly gathers her children, you embraced a people as your own.
When they turned away and rebelled your love remained steadfast. From them
you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of Mary, to be the living bread,
in whom all our hungers are satisfied.

He offered his life for sinners,
and with a love stronger than death
he opened wide his arms on the cross.
On the night before he died,
he came to supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he gave you thanks.
He broke it and gave it to them, saying:
*Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.*
At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:
*Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.*

Christ is the bread of life.

**When we eat this bread and drink this cup
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

Father, we plead with confidence
his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross;
we remember his dying and rising in glory,
and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.
Pour out your Holy Spirit as we bring before you these gifts of your creation;
may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence,
form us in the likeness of Christ,
and build us into a living temple to your glory.
Bring us at the last with Mary Sumner and all the saints
to the vision of that eternal splendour for which you have created us;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
by whom, with whom, and in whom,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:
**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation**

**but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen**

We break this bread to share in the one body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us your peace.**

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Happy are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

THE GIVING OF COMMUNION

Silence is kept.

Hymns during Holy Communion:

PRAYERS AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Lord of all,
We have celebrated through the sharing of bread and wine,
the depths of love your son, Jesus Christ showed by dying for us all.
Greater love has no-one than this;
that he lays down his life for his friends.
We are blessed that he calls us his friends. **Amen**

Final Hymn:

FINAL BLESSING

Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,
rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught,
and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Let us share with one another the peace of Christ.
The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you. Amen

Greet one another with a sign of the peace and the Service ends informally.

REFLECTION

The bricklayer laid a brick on a bed of cement
Then with a precise stroke of his trowel spread another layer
And without a by-your-leave, laid on another brick.
The foundations grew visibly,
The building rose, tall and strong, to shelter all.

I thought, Lord, of that brick buried in the darkness at the base of the big building.
No one sees it, but it accomplishes its task, and the other bricks need it.
Lord, what difference whether I am on the roof-top or in the foundations of your
building,
as long as I stand faithfully at the right place?
Michel Quoist: Prayers (Rowman & Littlefield, 1963)

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Hymn suggestions:

Lord for the years: *Timothy Dudley-Smith*

Before the throne of God above: *Original words by Charitie Lees Bancroft (1841-1892), alternate words and music by Vikki Cook*

Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice: *Matt Redman*

Be still for the presence of the Lord: *David J. Evans*

Hope of our Calling: *Copyright © Ally Barrett, 2006*