

# **Mothering Sunday**



Welcome to our Mothering Sunday Service

If you are at home, before starting the service you might like to:

- Find a candle ready to light after the first hymn
- Pick a posy of flowers as if you were going to share it in church

Praise God who loves us.

**Praise God who cares**

**HYMN – All things bright and beautiful**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPMA513-0Jw>

*All things bright and beautiful,  
all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful,  
the Lord God made them all.*

Each little flower that opens,  
each little bird that sings,  
he made their glowing colours,  
he made their tiny wings.  
(Refrain)

The cold wind in the winter,  
the pleasant summer sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden,  
he made them every one.  
(Refrain)

He gave us eyes to see them,  
and lips that we might tell  
how great is God Almighty,  
who has made all things well.  
(Refrain)

Cecil Frances Alexander  
(1818-1895)

**PRAISING & THANKING GOD**

Praise God who loves us.

**Praise God who cares**

## *Lighting of a candle*

We light this candle to remind us that the love of God is like a light in our darkness.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

We praise you, O God, for all mothers who have loved and laughed and laboured as they cared for their children;

**Blessed be God for ever.**

We praise you, O God, for all mothers who have wept in sorrow and joy for their children:

**Blessed be God for ever.**

We praise you, God, for your Son Jesus, born of a woman and nurtured in her love, and for Mary, who reminds us of your patient, abiding love.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Praise God who loves us.

**Praise God who cares**

## **CONFESSION**

Let us call to mind our sin, our failure to fully value the love of others, and our failure to love as Christ loves us.

*Silence for reflection.*

**Your love gives me life from the moment of conception. I fail to live as your child.**

**Lord, have mercy.**

**You call us to do good. We seek our own good.**

**Christ, have mercy.**

**You hear us when we cry for help. We ignore the cries of others.**

**Lord, have mercy.**

*Silence for reflection.*

May the Father of all mercies  
cleanse us from our sins,  
and restore us in his image  
to the praise and glory of his name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## COLLECT FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY

God our Father,  
your Son Jesus Christ lived in a family in Nazareth:  
grant that in our families on earth we may so learn to love and live together  
that we may rejoice as one family in your heavenly home; through Jesus  
Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A SONG OF ST ANSELM

**Gather your little ones to you, O God,  
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.**

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you;  
**you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.**

Often you weep over our sins and our pride,  
**tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgement.**

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds,  
**in sickness you nurse us, and with pure milk you feed us.**

Jesus, by your dying we are born to new life;  
**by your anguish and labour we come forth in joy.**

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;  
**through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.**

Your warmth gives life to the dead,  
**your touch makes sinners righteous.**

Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;  
**in your love and tenderness remake us.**

In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,  
**for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Gather your little ones to you, O God,  
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.**

## READING

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**HYMN – Jesus good above all other**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cgNRVPifDs>

Jesus, good above all other,  
gentle child of gentle mother,  
in a stable born our brother,  
give us grace to persevere.

Jesus, cradled in a manger,  
for us facing every danger,  
living as a homeless stranger,  
make we thee our King most dear.

Jesus, for thy people dying,  
risen master, death defying,  
Lord in heav'n, thy grace supplying,  
keep us to thy presence near.

Jesus, who our sorrows bearest,  
all our thoughts and hopes thou sharest,  
thou to man the truth declarest;  
help us all thy truth to hear.

Lord, in all our doings guide us;  
pride and hate shall ne'er divide us;  
we'll go on with thee beside us,  
and with joy we'll persevere!

Percy Dearmer  
(1867-1936)

## GOSPEL

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Luke 2:33-35*

The child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul is advising his readers how to behave – with “compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” Clothe yourselves in these, and all will be well. I wonder how well they followed his advice?

“Easier said than done,” a young mum might well have said to him, “It's all very well for a bachelor to say ‘be meek and patient’, but you try being meek and patient when you've got three screaming children clamouring for your attention as you're trying to get a meal on the table and, at the same time, finish off baking tomorrow's bread.”

I don't suppose Paul knew the word “multi-tasking”, and, as far as I know, he didn't offer any advice on how to do three things at once; yet it's been the everyday reality for mums from time immemorial. Real life for a mum is hard, messy and complex, often exhausting their reserves of patience.

Maybe Paul is not the best “How to bring up children” book, but he does hit the nail on the head a few verses later.

He says “clothe yourselves with love.” Wear love like a garment. Wrap yourself in love. It's gentle and kind, warm and comforting. It's that first smile from a baby, it's the look that says “I want you, I want a cuddle.” It's

the feeling when your child has said their first word.

Love is constantly being reawakened between mother and child. It's like a gift that keeps on being given.

It's the giving of love that we are celebrating today, the love that mums throughout their life give to their children.

For the deep, caring nature of love doesn't stop when a child goes off to school, or leaves home for university. A mother's love follows their child throughout adult life, perhaps being felt almost as pain when distance and circumstances mean that letting them lead their own life leaves a mum feeling helpless and powerless when their offspring are going through hard times.

And goodness me, it's this that makes the stories from Ukraine so heart-wrenching – hearing of mums being killed and leaving orphans; and seeing children clinging to their mothers, desperate for love and reassurance when they have to leave their homes or see their homes destroyed.

Families torn apart, knowing that when they are split up, the natural flow of love will struggle to reach across the hundreds or thousands of miles.

It's so distressing. And yet it's also a testament to the power of love, and how important love is. The strength of a loving bond sometimes only shows up when circumstances change beyond control, and it's shown by a deep sense of loss.

And in the short gospel reading there are echoes of the potential pain that love can bring, where Mary is being prepared by Simeon to face up to the loss of her son on the cross. Mary, carrying this burden all her life, saw it through and was there when he died, grieving along with her friends.

Love comes with a cost, but from it also springs life's greatest joys. Which is why today is a double celebration, not just thanking mothers who have given everything for their children, but also celebrating love itself – the joy that it brings, the happiness we see in the eyes of a new mum with her firstborn, the fun that families have together.

Think for a moment of happy times with your mum, and enjoy looking back and seeing a pattern of love working out. Joys maybe when holidaying, or going out together or just sitting round a laughter-rich meal table.

Love is the gift of mothers to their children, returned in kind. And we thank them for it today.

Amen.

**HYMN – Tell out my soul (Mary’s song when Jesus was born)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7QWLyDWe8>

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
tender to me the promise of his word;  
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;  
his mercy sure, from age to age to same;  
his holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;  
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
to children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith  
(b1926)

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Let us declare our faith in God.

**I / We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**I / We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**I / We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high**

**I / We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## THE PEACE

Praise God who loves us.

### **Praise God who cares**

Through the prophet Isaiah, God says,  
'As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.'

**The peace of the Lord be with us all.**

## PRAYERS

As children of a loving God who always listens to our cries,  
let us pray to our Father in heaven.

*Said by a child:*

Loving God, thank you for my mother. Please help her when times are hard.

*Said by a young adult:*

Loving God, you have given us the right to be called children of God. Help us to show your love in our homes that they may be places of love, security and truth.

*Said by a mother:*

Loving God, Jesus, your Son, was born into the family of Mary and Joseph; bless all parents and all who care for children; strengthen those families living under stress and may your love be known where no human love is found.

*Said by a grandmother:*

Loving God, we thank you for the family of the Church. We pray that all may find in her their true home; that the lonely, the marginalized, the rejected may be welcomed and loved in the name of Jesus.

*Said by someone whose mother is no longer alive:*

Loving God, as we see the brokenness of our world we pray for healing among the nations; for food where there is hunger; for freedom where there is oppression; for joy where there is pain; that your love may bring peace to all your children.

*You may like to add your own prayer(s) at this point, perhaps focusing on those you are most concerned about.*



## THE LORDS PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

## THANKSGIVING AND FLOWERS

*Hold the posy of flowers and, if you are at home, picture flowers being given out in church.*

**Thank you God for the love of our mothers:  
thank you God for their care and concern over the years;  
thank you God for the joys they have shared with us;  
thank you God for the pains they have borne for us;  
thank you God for all that they give or have given us;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Praise God who loves us.  
**Praise God who cares**

## HYMN – He’s got the whole world in his hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWpwCE94L3w>

He’s got the whole world in his hands,  
He’s got the whole wide world in his hands,  
He’s got the whole world in his hands,  
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

He’s got you and me brother in his hands,  
He’s got you and me brother in his hands,  
He’s got you and me brother in his hands,  
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

He’s got you and me sister in his hands,  
He’s got you and me sister in his hands,  
He’s got you and me sister in his hands,  
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

He’s got the little tiny baby in his hands,  
He’s got the little tiny baby in his hands,  
He’s got the little tiny baby in his hands,  
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

He’s got the everybody here in his hands,  
He’s got the everybody here in his hands,  
He’s got the everybody here in his hands,  
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

Traditional

## CLOSING PRAYER

Praise God who loves us.

**Praise God who cares.**

May God, who gave birth to all creation, bless us:  
may God, who became incarnate by an earthly mother, bless us:  
may God, who broods as a mother over her children, bless us.  
May almighty God bless us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
now and for ever.

**Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**



