## A Mother’s Union Liturgy for Mothering Sunday

## Theme: Nurturing Hope in a Broken World

The Gathering  
Please stand as the ministers enter the church   
A minister greets the people with these words  
In the name of the Father,

and of the Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

*All* **Amen.**

## The Lord be with you All ****And also with you.****

**Welcome  
*Specific words of welcome to the community can be said here by the president or minister.***

Traditionally today is a time to celebrate our mother churches, those people and places which have nurtured our faith. But for many this time comes with painful associations with motherhood, feelings of inadequacy or loss. Yet in Christ, we are given both comfort and family.

We have come together today to give thanks to God for all those people who have nurtured us, and to offer ourselves to nurture others, with God’s help. We have also come to acknowledge the pain of a hurting world, where we have failed to nurture each other. We come to receive again from the God of compassion and mercy.

**Prayer of Preparation**

Loving, compassionate Father,

As a mother hen gathers her chicks,

so you draw the whole human family to yourself.

Bring us together now, Lord,

that we may today and forever be united under your wing

in all our sorrows and joys.

*All* **Amen.**

*Hymn or song maybe be sung here*

**Prayers of Penitence**

Our Saviour Christ says to all who truly turn to him:

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden,

and I will give you rest.

Therefore, let us confess our sins,

seeking the embrace of God’s forgiveness and peace.

*Space for reflection*

We have failed to nurture the needy,

Lord have mercy

All **Lord, have mercy.**

We have failed to make space in our lives for the broken-hearted.

Lord have mercy

All **Christ, have mercy.**

We struggle to forgive those who have withheld their love from us.

Lord have mercy

All **Lord, have mercy.**

**Absolution**

The president says

May the God of love and power

forgive you and free you from your sins,

heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,

and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

**All**   **Amen.**

**Collect**

Either of the following may be used

God of compassion,

whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,

shared the life of a home in Nazareth,

and on the cross, drew the whole human family to himself:

strengthen us in our daily living

that in joy and in sorrow

we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever.

All **Amen**

*(or)*

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.  
All **Amen**

Liturgy of the Word

**New Testament Reading**

2 Corinthians 1.3-7

*The following introduction to the reading may be said*

*Reader:*    Paul describes the Christian community as one where we nurture each other in good times and bad.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

This is the word of the Lord.

*All***Thanks be to God.**

*A hymn or song maybe sung here*

**Gospel Reading**

Luke 2.33-35

*The following introduction to the reading may be said*

*Reader:* Mary is warned of the cost of motherhood.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

*All* **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.

*All* **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

***Ideas for talks and sermons***

*We have suggested three questions that could be used as starters for sermons and reflections that link in with the readings.*

* *How is Mary’s story expressive of the brokenness we face in today’s world and how is her pain consoled?*
* *What does family look like to God? (Concerning Mary, who had to allow her son to leave her in a painful way.)*
* *What nurtures you and brings you hope? Christ has given us abundant consolation, so how can we bring consolation to a hurting world? (Links with the New Testament reading.)*

***Response action/activity***

*You may like to invite people to write prayers of thanks for those who have nurtured them and to identify places where God’s nurturing love is needed.*

*Children might like to draw a picture of a family, or a couple of friends – to show how they care for each other.*

**The Creed**

Let us declare our faith in God. *(Simple sign actions can accompany these statements)*

*All* **We believe in God the Father,**

**from whom every family**

**in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,**

**who lives in our hearts through faith,**

**and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,**

**who strengthens us**

**with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

*The Biddings should be supplemented with locally appropriate prayers*

Gathered together as children in God’s family, let us pray.

Eternal God, you are constant with your people.

Like a mother you draw all your children to your heart…

Guide us in ways of truth that we may rejoice in your bountiful goodness.

Abide in our hearts

*All*  **Show us your love**

Holy God, your presence is always before us.

We give thanks for all who have nurtured us and helped us grow in faith and trust…

Bless all midwives of the gospel.

Increase your Church in hope and courage to proclaim your love.

Abide in our hearts

*All*  **Show us your love**

God our Father and Mother,

you allow us to share in your creative purpose.

Sustain and keep all parents and children,

that through the love that is shared our lives may be blessed…

Be with all for whom this day brings pain and regret to mind.

Transform us through your brooding grace.

Abide in our hearts

*All*  **Show us your love**

God our comfort and protector,

in times of plenty and in times of need, you cradle our life in your hands.

We entrust to your care all in any kind of need…

Encircle them with your love and keep them ever within your tender mercy.

Abide in our hearts

*All*  **Show us your love**

God of love, from the cross your Son commended his mother to the care of his beloved disciple.

Hear the cry of all who mourn.

Comfort and sustain them in their grief…

Bring us to rejoice with you and the fellowship of saints in our heavenly home.

*(Prayers by Ian Black)*

Merciful Father,

*All* **accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

**The Peace**

Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God.

We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

*All* **And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.  
*All may exchange a sign of peace – perhaps using BSL sign for ‘peace’*

**Offertory**

*A hymn or song may be sung here*

**Eucharistic Prayer D**

The Lord is here.

*All* **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

*All* **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*All* **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, good Father to us all,

your face is turned towards your world.

In love you gave us Jesus your Son

to rescue us from sin and death.

Your Word goes out to call us home

to the city where angels sing your praise.

We join with them in heaven’s song:

*All*    **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.]**

Father of all, we give you thanks

for every gift that comes from heaven.

To the darkness Jesus came as your light.

With signs of faith and words of hope

he touched untouchables with love and washed the guilty clean.

This is his story.

*All* **This is our song:**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

The crowds came out to see your Son,

yet at the end they turned on him.

On the night he was betrayed

he came to table with his friends

to celebrate the freedom of your people.

This is his story.

*All* **This is our song:**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;

he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:

This is my body, given for you all.

Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;

he took the cup, gave it and said:

This is my blood, shed for you all

for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this in remembrance of me.

This is our story.

*All* **This is our song:**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup

we celebrate the cross

on which he died to set us free.

Defying death he rose again

and is alive with you to plead for us and all the world.

This is our story.

*All* **This is our song:**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Send your Spirit on us now

that by these gifts we may feed on Christ

with opened eyes and hearts on fire.

May we and all who share this food

offer ourselves to live for you

and be welcomed at your feast in heaven

where all creation worships you,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

*All* **Blessing and honour and glory and power**

**be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Lord’s Prayer**

*The priest may say*

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

*All* **Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as 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.**

**Breaking of the Bread**

*The President breaks the consecrated bread*

We break this bread

to share in the body of Christ

*All* **Though we are many, we are one body**

**because we all share in the on bread.**

*The Agnus Dei may be used as the bread is broken*

**Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world,**

**have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world,**

**have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world,**

**grant us peace.**

**Giving of Communion**

*The president invites the people to communion*

God’s holy gifts

for God’s holy people.

*All* **Jesus Christ is holy,**

**Jesus Christ is Lord,**

**to the glory of God the Father.**

*Activities/songs during communion to involve all ages.*

*E.g. a bunch of flowers (or another suitable token) given to each person as they return from communion.*

*Ensure flowers for those who don’t come up.*

*Hymn or Song maybe sung here or during distribution of flowers*

**Prayer After Communion**

Loving God,

as a mother feeds her children at the breast

you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life:

help us who have tasted your goodness

to grow in grace within the household of faith;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All   **Almighty God,**

**we thank you for feeding us**

**with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.**

**Through him we offer you our souls and bodies**

**to be a living sacrifice.**

**Send us out**

**in the power of your Spirit**

**to live and work**

**to your praise and glory.**

**Amen.**

*The Dismissal*

*Notices*

*We sit and listen to the notices*

*A Hymn may be sung.*

**Blessing**

May the Lord who brought us all to birth,

strengthen us for daily life.

May the Lord who provides for all our needs

sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love is for all,

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.

*All* **Amen.**

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