

Mothers' Union Act of Reflection and Remembrance outline

**A worship outline for when members can gather together again:
A time to acknowledge the loss we feel – of people, opportunities and occasions, freedom etc. A time to affirm our hope for the future whilst acknowledging there is still uncertainty. Life is different.**

The components included in this outline are just suggestions. You may wish to adapt for a small informal gathering or use as a basis for a more formal service, whilst adhering to current guidelines.

Welcome and worship

Welcome to our Mothers' Union act of worship. We gather to remember and reflect; to acknowledge and lament loss of all kinds over the past months. We gather to bring our thanks for God's steadfast love and to affirm our hope for the future.

We take a few moments in the quiet to look around and find joy and comfort in familiar faces; to mourn the ones who are absent from us. We make ready to look back and remember what has been lost; to look to God for assurance and hope.

The Lord is good,
our refuge and deliverer.
He cares for those who hope in him.
We draw near to him in faith.

God of Hope,
we come into your presence this day
with confidence that you will meet us here.
Where there is sadness, bring joy;
Where there is tiredness, bring refreshment;
Where there is despair, bring a renewed sense of hope.
Let this place be a sanctuary, a safe haven for us,
a home for holy words and songs and prayers
as we devote ourselves to you.
We pray this in Jesus' name **Amen**
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Opening hymn

Opening prayer

Ever-present God,
you walk with us
through good times
and bad,
mountain top
and valley deep,
your footsteps our guide,
hands our support.

Ever-present God,
you are close to us
when life is smooth
or rough,
in wholeness
and brokenness,
your healing our hope,
your touch our desire.

**Ever-present God,
bring comfort and peace
and the warmth
of your presence
and we shall fear no thing,
for you are with us,
always. Amen**

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Old Testament Reading: Lamentations 3:20-26

I well remember my troubles
and my soul is downcast within me.
²¹ But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
²² The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
²⁴ "The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."
²⁵ The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him.
²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the Lord.

New Testament reading: Mark 4:35-39

That day when evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.'
³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'
³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Hymn

Time of reflection

Leave a time of silence after each section. You may like to light a candle for each.

We take time to lament:

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted. *Matthew 5:4*
May God, in our grieving, be our comfort.
In times of sorrow may he give us peace.

We take time to remember:

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds
healing their pain and comforting their sorrow. *Psalm 147:3 (AMP)*
May God, in our remembering, be our companion.
In times of sadness may he share our loss.

We take time to be assured:

The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms. *Deuteronomy 33:27*
May God, in our uncertainty, be our shelter.
In times of unease may he keep us secure.

We take time to hope:

May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,
even as we put our hope in you. *Psalm 33:22*
May God, in his mercy, lighten our spirit.
As we look to the future may he give us hope. Amen

You may like to play music softly whilst giving time for losses and hopes to be written on paper hearts, doves etc. Gather these together and place at the front, before a cross or in the centre as a symbolic offering to God.

Our world has changed
yet you remain the same.
The storms threaten
yet you speak peace.
We mourn our losses
you wipe away every tear.

Weeping may last through the night,
but joy comes with the morning.

**Loving Lord,
who wipes away every tear from our eye,
draw near as we mourn the loss
of that which is dear.
In the midst of sorrow be our comfort,
in the place of sadness be our hope. Amen**

Talk

If a talk is to be included it could focus both on the merits of looking back in reflection and looking forward in hope and faith.

**God of all hopefulness,
when disappointments weigh us down
open our eyes to see your creative ways;
new plans for life, new instances of grace.**

We pray for renewed vision:
to see a path of life
emerging through the wilderness
of former hopes and dreams.

We pray for clear vision:
to see a stream of grace
flowing through the wasteland
of loss and disappointments.

**God of all hopefulness,
inspire us with fresh revelation
of your plans for our lives and our world.
Instil in us a sense of adventure
to embrace what lies ahead
with anticipation and hope. Amen**

Final Hymn

Final blessing

We praise you, our merciful God,
for your steadfast love which upholds us
through every circumstance of life.

In the midst of the storm
you give us your peace.
In the warmth of the sun
you give us your joy.
In the sight of the rainbow
you give us your hope. Amen

We say the Grace together