

**Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit
Worship at Home
Mothering Sunday 15 March 2026**

Prepared by Rev John Archer

A Health Warning

An absurd practice has developed such that if anything contentious is written or spoken, a warning has to be given. In this service which centres on a mother (Mary) it is to be understood that the mothering function can be undertaken by either gender and people who are not the biological parent. Also in any congregation there will be people who have lost their mothers. In these cases maybe you could focus on an existing mother you know who you could support in your prayers,

Call to Worship

Jesus our brother in your human life you welcomed children and made them a sign of the coming of the Kingdom. We praise you Holy Spirit, wild wind brooding over all creation, you are the midwife of our longings. We wonder at your works.

Read pray or sing StF 333

[Majesty worship his majesty StF333](#)

Majesty, worship his majesty;
unto Jesus be glory, honour and praise.
Majesty, kingdom authority,
flows from his throne unto his own,
his anthem raise.

So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus,
magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King.
Majesty, worship his majesty,
Jesus, who died, now glorified,
King of all kings.

Jack Hayford

Prayers

We thank you for those who perform the role of mother in our society whoever they are.
for all they mean or have meant to us
for the love that they have shown and the care
they have given,
for the dedication they show
the sacrifices they make
the support they offer
and the guidance they provide.

We thank you Lord God for this day of saying thank you, for this opportunity to say what we so often mean to say but rarely do.
For mothers and motherhood, for children and families, we bring to you this day our grateful praise.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen**

Pray the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed by 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours,
Now and for ever. Amen.

Bible Reading

Luke 1 : 26 – 56

Read sing or pray StF 187

[StF 187 - The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came \(SATB\)](#)

- 1 The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady.'
Gloria!
- 2 'For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold;
most highly favoured lady.'
Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name.'
most highly favoured lady.
Gloria!

4 Of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever
say,
'Most highly favoured lady.'
Gloria!

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

Sermon

Today we focus on Mary, the mother of Jesus. As such she had very special responsibilities, but there are certain things about her which are true of all the best mothers (and fathers who act as mothers too)

Firstly - Her Service

To be a servant is not glamorous and popular today. Being a servant to her children will frequently mean a mother gives up a promising career. My wife did that when we started a family. Her salary and job prospects were at that stage far better than mine. Sometimes it means giving up that time that would have been spent on a loved hobby or sport

"I am the Lord's servant" said Mary (1:38)

Spend a few moments thinking about the ways your mother serves (served) you.

Secondly – Her Sense

My experience is that in families it is so often the mother who shows common sense – not over reacting or dismissing issues. Mary could not understand often what was happening to her son, but she did have the sense to think about what was happening and begin to realise her son was special

"Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them (2 : 19)

We do well to follow Mary and think about the Christ child and what he can do for us and with us.

Thirdly – Her Sorrow

Some of the deepest worries parents (and especially mothers) have is about their children. How will they grow up? Will they keep healthy? What study/work they will do? Who they will marry? Simeon says to Mary

*"A sword will pierce through your soul"
2 : 34 /35*

Sometimes mothers have to face great sorrow for their children. Mary was to face many sorrows. She saw her son rejected. Her life was lived in the shadow of the cross.

Fourthly – Her Saviour

Mary was a remarkable person but she needed Jesus as her saviour.

"My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour" 1 : 47

Mary was with the disciples in the book of Acts as a follower of Jesus. Mary needed Jesus as her Saviour, as do we whether we are mothers fathers or children

Read prayerfully the hymn by Fred Pratt Green

How great the debt we owe
To those who love us most.
They give us birth and help us grow,
And rarely count the cost

To make us feel secure
They lose their life in ours
And what they mean to us is more
Than we can say with flowers.

How can we measure love?
Yet treasure it we must
For what God gives us from above
Is held by us in trust

Then let us vow today,
As those who know love's worth,
To love, to worship, and obey
The lord of all the earth

Prayers for Others

Gracious God
You know what it is to love your children
So now we pray for those entrusted with the
responsibility of motherhood.

Grant to each one your wisdom, guidance and
strength.

We pray especially for single mothers, faced with
the challenge of raising a child on their own.

Give them patience, devotion and dedication.
We pray for those who have lost their mothers or
never known them, those orphaned as children or
given up for adoption.

We pray for those whose mothers have died and for whom this day brings pain rather than pleasure.

Grant them your comfort and support and the assurance of your love always with them

Finally we pray for those separated from their children – those whose children have moved far from home, those who have suffered a miscarriage or been through an abortion, those who have endured the agony of a child's death.
Give to them your solace and hope for the future.

Gracious God
Grant to all mothers your blessing.
Hear our prayer in the name of Christ
Amen

Read pray or sing StF186

StF 186 Tell out my soul

- 1 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.
- 2 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 the same;
his holy name -- the Lord, the Mighty One.
- 3 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.
- 4 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 (b. 1926)

Blessing

Wherever you are, wherever you go,
Whatever your strengths
Whatever your weaknesses,
God will be with you
to hold, to heal, to guide and to bless
Go then in peace, assured of his love.

Amen

*Acknowledgement
Prayers are amended from "Prayers for all
Seasons" by Nick Fawcett*

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