

Praying through the year

Enriching our prayer life

This resource includes creative ways to pray and new ideas for leading prayer. There are fourteen sections that could be used at meetings, services or events throughout the year. Each theme also includes prayers on the given topic, a Bible verse and if used as a whole should take about 15 minutes to complete. These resources can be used in their entirety or just to stimulate further ideas. They can be the basis of collective prayer or used at other times on your own. A list of resources needed for each idea and where to source them is included.

The Themes are:

- 130th anniversary
- Advent
- Christmas
- New beginnings/ hope
- Love one another
- Lent
- Easter
- Living fire
- Using our talents
- Family life
- Holidays
- Harvest
- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance

Please take time to regularly pray for the people listed on the Diocesan intercession calendar, our various events and our projects and include our Diocesan prayer in your branch meetings.

This prayer speaks to us in Oxford Diocese, affirming what God would have us do and challenging us to carry out his purpose.

MU Oxford Diocesan Prayer

Only God can create, **but we are called upon to value that creation.**
Only God can give life, **but we are called to transmit it and respect it.**
Only God can make growth happen, **but we are called to guide it and give it direction.**
Only God can give faith, **but we are called to be signs of God to one another.**
Only God can give love, **but we are called to grow in caring for each other.**
Only God can give hope, **but we are called to enable people to believe in themselves.**
Only God can give power and energy, **but we are called upon to get things going.**
Only God can give peace, **but we are called to build bonds that bring people together.**
Only God can give happiness, **but we are invited to laugh.**
Only God is the way, **but we are called to show it to others.**
Only God is the light, **but we are called to let it shine forth in the world.**
Only God can make miracles happen, **but we are invited to offer our five loaves and two fishes.**
Only God can do the impossible, **but it is up to us to do what is possible.**
Praise the Lord for his goodness to us his servants; **for our prayer sustains us, our faith empowers us and our deeds unite us in his service. Amen**

130th Anniversary

2018 is a special year for the Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese as we will celebrate 130 years since we were founded. This landmark anniversary provides an ideal opportunity for prayer in thanksgiving for all that has been achieved in those years and to ask for guidance to develop plans for a long and successful future.

Please set aside time to pray together for our future during the year.

MU Oxford Diocesan Thanksgiving Prayer as we celebrate 130 years

Living Lord,

We give grateful thanks for the Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese and for your love that continues to inspire us into active service as we celebrate our 130th year. Strengthen us to do your work, encouraging us to reach out into our communities bringing your hope to those in need.

We thank you for all our members, past and present and pray that you will guide others to join us, so that together we may fulfill your vision for our work. Be with us in this special year and help us to make wise plans that enable us to grow and thrive for many generations to come.

Amen

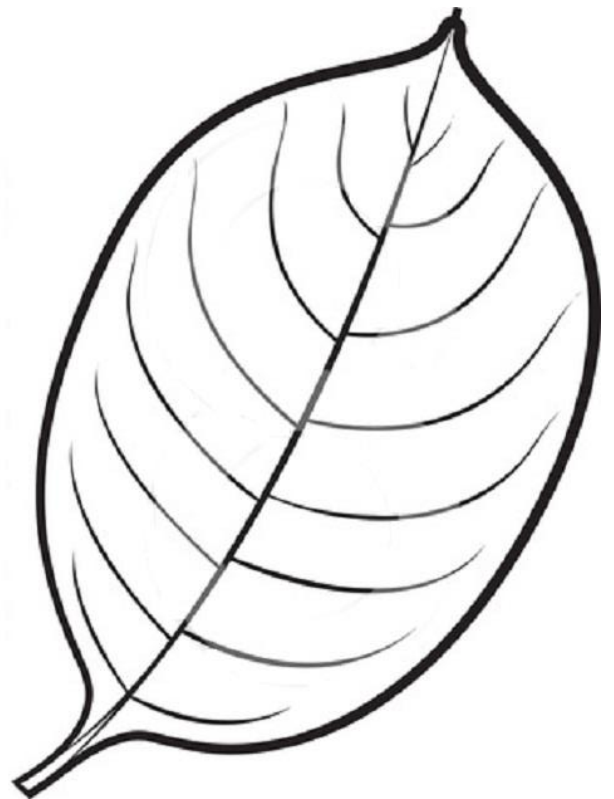
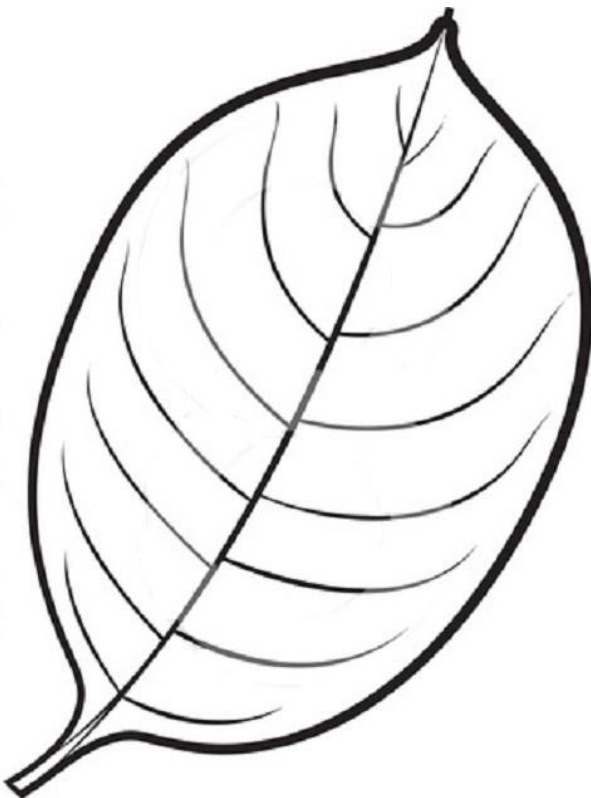
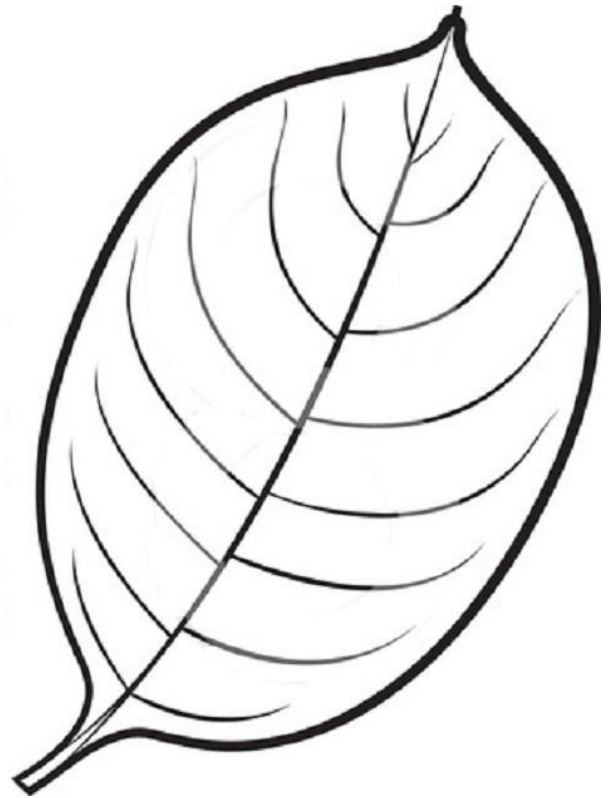
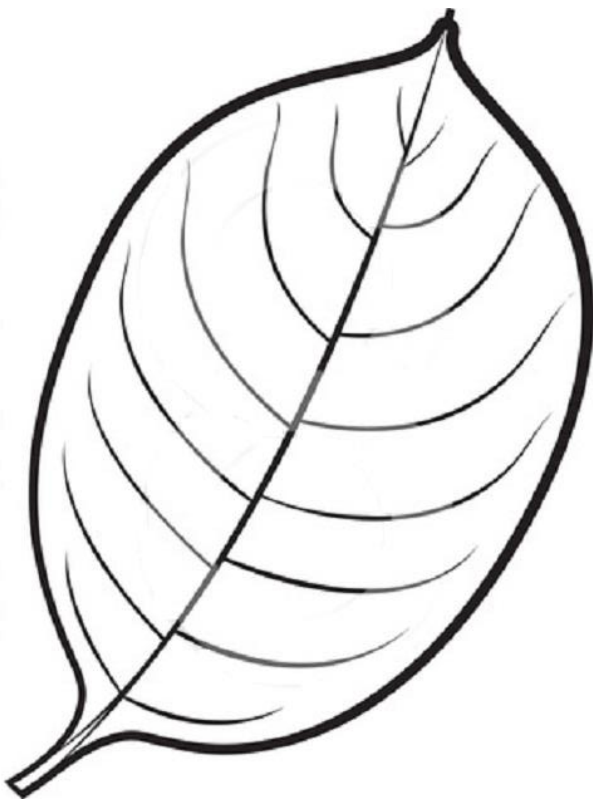
Creative idea, make a thanksgiving tree

You might like to make a prayer tree with thanksgiving leaves (using the template below) to recognize what has been achieved and the projects that your branch has been involved with. Give each person a leaf, different coloured paper/ card can look effective, A4 sheets are available from The Works, W.H. Smiths or Ryman. You might like to discuss what projects, major events and the people you have helped over the years (this will help newer members to realise just what we have achieved). Remember to think about fundraising and support for overseas projects.



Each person should write something on the leaf that they are thanking God for that is connected to their membership of the Mothers' Union. Ideas can range from friendship to the outcomes of specific projects. A simple "tree" to hang them on can be made out of branches cut from the garden or twigs that are sold at a garden centre. Use a hole-punch to make holes in the stem of each leaf and use ribbon to tie the leaves to tree.

Below are some 130th cards to print off, so that you can keep one in your handbag or purse. Print and then cut along the lines to make 8 per printed sheet.



As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

Celebration

Let them thank the Lord for his faithful love and his wondrous works for all people, *Psalm 107:8*

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

Celebration

They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. *Psalm 145:7*

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

God's faithfulness

May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands. *Psalm 90:1, 17*

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

God's faithfulness

The Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation. *Psalm 100:5*

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

God's faithfulness

The plans of the Lord stand firm, the purposes of his heart through all generations. Psalm 33:11

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

Our faith for the future

For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. *Jeremiah 29:11*

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

Our faith for the future

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. *Hebrews 11:1*

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

Celebration

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! *Psalm 150:1-3*

Advent

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am **the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have **the light of life**."

John 8:12 New International Version (NIV)

Creative idea, Jesus light of the world

Purchase a map of the world large enough to place tea lights onto it. Alternatively use a smaller A4 printed version available from: <http://geology.com/world/world-map.gif> which could be put into the middle of a table and the tea lights placed around it.

Please be careful with lit flames and have water or sand nearby just in case. Battery operated tea lights are now cheaply available in stores such as Wilko which could be used instead.



Take a moment in silence to consider the parts of the world where we would like **Jesus as the Light of the World** to bring peace. Then prayerfully let each person take a turn to place a candle onto the map. Remember our Link Dioceses, Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Victoria Nyanza in Tanzania, Ahoada and Warri in Nigeria, Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea.

Dear Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace,

We ask you to bless your troubled world, torn apart by war and conflict. Let us play our part by living peacefully with one another and do everything that we can to promote reconciliation and love. Amen

As we await the second coming of Christ our Lord and begin our plans to celebrate his birth at Christmas let us dwell on some of his names and titles that are found in the Bible.

You may like to spend time looking at:

Emmanuel: (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:23) – Literally “God with us.” Both Isaiah and Matthew affirm that the Christ who would be born in Bethlehem would be God Himself who came to earth in the form of a man to live among His people.

Light of the World: (John 8:12) – Jesus came into the world to shed the light of life and truth through His work and His words.

Prince of peace: (Isaiah 9:6) – Jesus came to bring peace between God and man who were separated by sin.

Son of God: (Luke 1:35; John 1:49) – Jesus is the “only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). Used 42 times in the New Testament, “Son of God” affirms the deity of Christ.

Way, Truth, Life: (John 14:6) – Jesus is the path to God, the source of truth and eternal life.

Prayers

We think of our Link Dioceses, Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Victoria Nyanza in Tanzania, Ahoada and Warri in Nigeria, Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. Let us pray for the Mothers’ Union across the world and all the projects that its members undertake. Bringing literacy and enlightenment, prayer and support for families around the globe.

Dear God,
Make us ready to receive Jesus, your gift of love.
Ready to hear the good news,
ready to go and tell everyone else,
ready to do all we can to make a difference
and ready for everything that you’ve got planned for us.
Amen

Living Lord,
Shine on us, to illuminate our path,
so that with each step we grow closer to you.
Shine on us, in every part of our lives,
and let your radiance fill us with joy and love.
Shine on us, so brightly that we become as one beam
that can reflect your light onto the other people we meet.
In the power of your name, Amen

Christmas

¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:10-12 (NIV)

Creative idea, what would you give?

We are all familiar with the stories of the first few visitors who came to see Jesus and his parents in the days after his birth. Traditionally we think of them giving him gifts, the shepherds with a lamb and the Magi bringing gold, frankincense and myrrh. We exchange gifts at Christmas and put a great deal of thought into what we give the people we care about. But how do we respond to our loving Lord who knows us better than anyone and who loves us unconditionally? What can we give him in return for his love?



Share thoughts about what you could do this Christmas as a gift for our Saviour and a visible witness to his Lordship in your life. Why not buy an extra gift and give it to someone who may be on their own this Christmas.

Prayers

We think of those who will be on their own during the festive season without family and friends to celebrate with. We also remember those separated through work, illness, family breakdown or those in prison who cannot be with the people they love. We pray for the MU projects that support these people at this time of year.

Dear Lord,

Help us to simplify our activities this Christmas
so we can focus on our celebration of your birth.

Thank you that you came to be the Prince of Peace,
may your peace reign in our hearts today.

Thank you for your life-giving love for us,
may we find new ways to share your love with those around us. Amen.

Dear Lord,

I thank you for coming to earth so you could redeem me.

I will be forever grateful that you have saved me and made me your own.

Without you, I would be lost and my life would lack purpose and direction.

But with you I know that I can face anything that life may bring. Alleluia!

Lord, you are still our Joy. You are still our Peace. But you are no longer a baby in the manger. *You are Lord of lords and King of kings. And we will honour you as our Lord, Master and Friend — this Christmas and always.*

New beginnings/ hope

God's compassion is new every morning

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." *Lamentations 3:22-24 (NIV)*

Creative idea, prayers for the New Year

God always offers us a new day and a new dawn, no matter what has gone before. At the start of this new year, why not take a moment to thank him for last year and dedicate this year to him - to serve him and love him afresh. A good way of reviewing the year ahead is to write down the main areas of your life (e.g. work - family - friends - church - the Mothers' Union etc.) and then think about what God might want to do in these areas of your life for the next year.

You can use the template below to print sheets for people to write on. Once written, place them in a self-addressed envelope. Ask someone to take responsibility to post these in six months' time. It will be timely reminder of what you think God has asked you to accomplish this year and you can see what has happened in the meantime.

Prayers

Remember to pray for our branch projects, for new members to join us in our work and renewed energy to accomplish the tasks that God has set before us.

Lord, through your grace you make all things new
and cause our spirits to be born again.

Renew our passion for serving you
and bring hope alive again in our hearts.

Thank you for the new year ahead,
for all the potential it holds.

Come and inspire us to do great things
so that others will see the wonders of God
and forever praise your glorious name.

Amen

*New life and new
beginnings;
May my life be lived
for Jesus and
starting from today
may I find new ways
to love and serve
Him.*

Anglican Prayer suitable for the start of a new year:-

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to *thee*, so guide our minds,
so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly *thine*,
utterly dedicated *unto thee*; and then use us, we pray *thee*, as *thou wilt*,
and always to *thy* glory and the welfare of *thy* people;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

(Source: Book of Common Prayer, 1979 version, Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA).

My prayers for the year ahead

What is God guiding me to do?

For me, my family and friends

For my church, our community and the world

For the Mothers' Union

To help new members to join us

My prayers for the year ahead

What is God guiding me to do?

For me, my family and friends

For my church, our community and the world

For the Mothers' Union

To help new members to join us

Love one another

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:7-8 (NIV)

Creative idea, Newspaper Prayers

God calls us to love one another and as members of the Mothers' Union we reach out as His hands to help others in need. Take a current newspaper and divide the pages so that each member can each find an article to focus on. Talk about these together and then compose a prayer for the people, location or situation it describes.

One format is to say:

Thank you Lord that you always listen when we pray, we pray today for the people involved in and ask that you help them at this time.

You could vote for the most deserving cause and all agree to focus on this in your daily prayers over the coming week.

If it is a local paper you could choose some recent Birth, Marriage and Death Announcements. Pray for the people named and their families.

Prayers

We pray for all our members and the work that they carry out for the Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese. We pray for the members of the Indoor Member Prayer Circle and join our prayers with theirs for the future success of all our endeavours.

Let Us Love One Another

Let us love one another and pray;
Let us love one another and be faithful;
Let us love one another and be humble,
be filled with the charity of God;
Let us love one another with God, in God, and for God;
And we shall thus be one with Him for all eternity.

Amen

(Prayer of Cornelia Connelly who founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus)

Dearest Lord,
May we leave a trace of love from our journey here on earth, a tangible thread that bears witness to our faith and endures so that future generations fully understand how truly wonderful you are.
Amen

Lent

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

Creative idea, a wooden cross with salt dough prayers

God gives us unconditional love and He loves each of us the same regardless of our merit. Remember that Christ died for us and will always be there for us, willingly carrying our burdens. Use the dough to represent how God's love has inspired your life in your actions towards others in the world. Now place your shape at the foot of the cross as a symbol of your continued service to Jesus, our Lord.

Standing Cross

These are obtainable from:

- Christian Gift Company
www.thechristiangiftcompany.co.uk
 - Love into Action www.loveintoaction.org
 - Christian bits www.christianbits.co.uk
- And many other places



SALT DOUGH RECIPE

- 1/2 cup of salt
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 cup of flour
-

HOW TO MAKE THE SALT DOUGH

Add the 1/2 cup of salt and 1 cup of flour to a bowl, and stir in the water adding it slowly. You may not need all of the water. You want the dough to be dry. If it gets sticky add more flour. Knead the dough, then flatten out and shape it as wanted.



Once you have made the shapes you want then you need to dry them so you can paint or write on them. Traditionally salt dough is dried in the oven which takes about 3 hours at a low heat so they don't burn. But instead, you can swap your oven for a microwave and microwave on high for approximately 90 secs.

Prayers

We pray for the marginalised people in our society. For the homeless, people who use food banks and those in prison. Help us to support the projects that allow members to walk alongside these people in their time of trouble. May we be generous with our time and provide the resources needed so that we can support this important work.

A Prayer before a crucifix, by *St. Francis of Assisi*

Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the shadows of my heart,
and grant unto me a right faith,
a certain hope and perfect charity,
sense and understanding, Lord,
so that I may accomplish
Thy holy and true command. Amen

At the foot of the cross, in silence, we pray for those who cannot pray, for those who suffer and for everything which troubles our hearts. Lord God, your sacrifice and suffering have made us whole. In silence we pray now for love, for healing and for peace of mind.

In Jesus' name Amen

Take my life, and let it be by *Frances Havergal*

Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne,
Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Dear Lord,

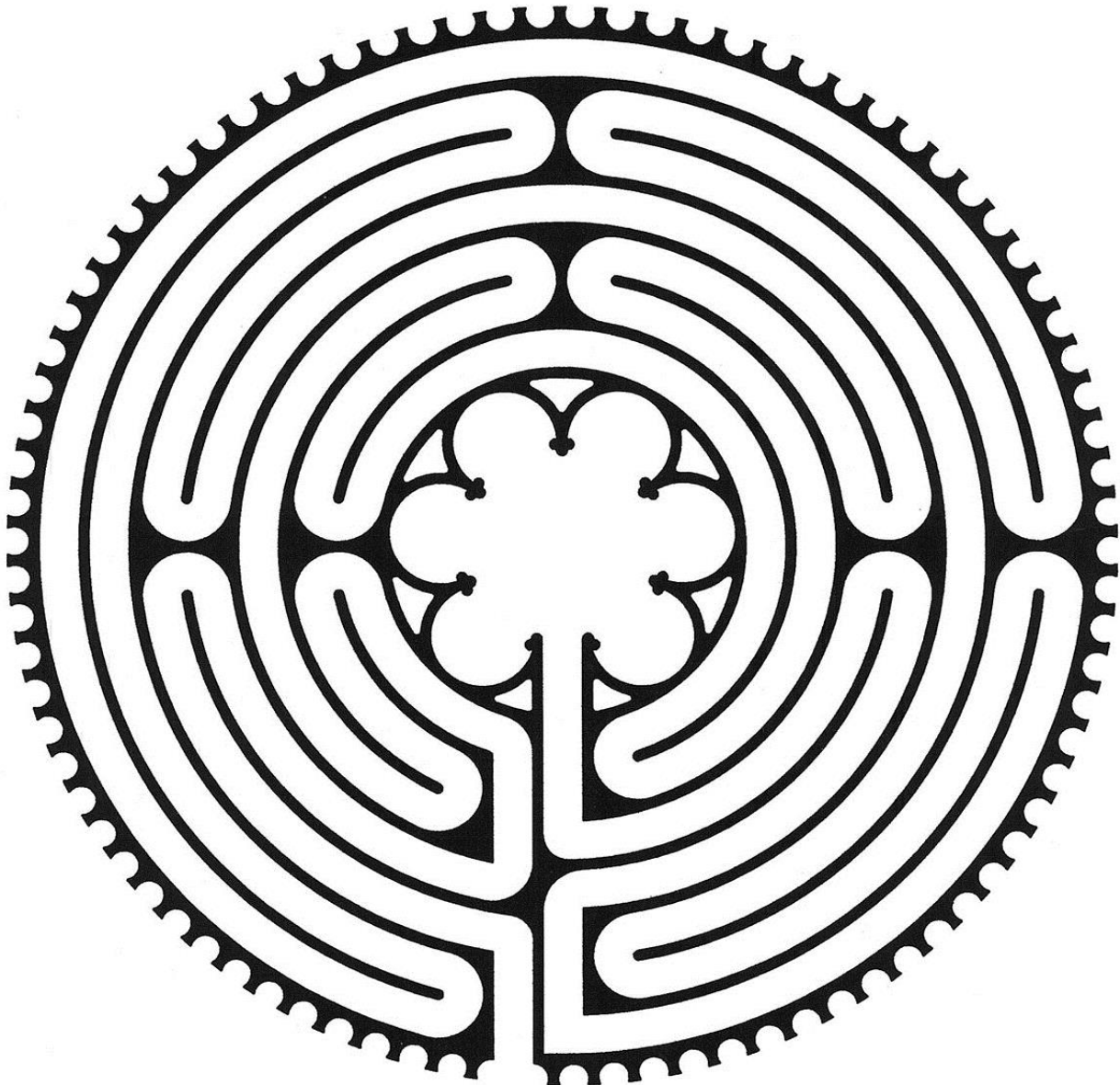
Let me reach out and feel your hand to guide me,
so that everything I do this day and in this season of Lent
comes from you and is inspired by you.

Help me to remember that you are the only truth
and to keep my focus on you at the centre of my life. Amen

Easter

⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered his words. *Luke 24:4-8 (NIV)*

Creative idea, finger labyrinth



Use the finger labyrinth to focus your prayers today. As you trace the lines think about Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the others with them who found the empty tomb and ran to tell the disciples. What is your first memory of hearing the Good news? Give thanks for all the people who teach and share the Word.

Prayers

We pray for the members of the Clergy who live and work in the Oxford Diocese. We pray that they will support the Mothers' Union as members and co-workers in our projects. We pray that God will deepen the bonds between us so that together we may share the Good News in our communities.

Dear Lord,

We give thanks for all those who have answered your call and generously dedicated themselves to service in your church.

We pray for all our Clergy and ask you to bless them in their work, which they carry out in your name.

May you grant them every good thing that they need to accomplish your will.

Continue to encourage them in their vocation, helping them to live according to your wishes so that they may share your love with everyone they meet.

Enkindle in our parishes a missionary zeal and inspire others to join us in our work so that together we may meet the needs of our local communities and thus promote your Kingdom here on earth.

Amen.

Halleluiah! Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed!

May this declaration resound throughout the world touching the lives of all who hear it.

May it be forever the truth of which we speak and the call that guides our daily lives.

Halleluiah! Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! Amen

Dear Lord,

We thank you that Easter is for all people
who confess with voices, hearts and lives
that the tomb is empty because Jesus is risen,
that we might know forgiveness,
that lives might be reborn and your name glorified
now and for eternity.

"The great gift of Easter is hope - Christian hope which makes us have that confidence in God, in his ultimate triumph, and in his goodness and love, which nothing can shake."

Basil C Hume, (1923-1999) Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

Living fire

Never let the fire in your heart go out. Keep it alive. Serve the Lord. When you hope, be joyful. When you suffer, be patient. When you pray, be faithful. Share with God's people who are in need. Welcome others into your homes. *Romans 12:11-13 NIRV*

Creative idea, circle dancing

God sent his Holy Spirit to guide us to live as Christians, and to help us offer him prayer and praise. The flame symbolises the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the movement of the Holy Spirit now. Try undertaking a simple circle dance together to symbolise the Holy Spirit moving within you.

Choose a gentle piece of music then all join hands in a circle. Gently sway from left to right feeling the rhythm of the music. Be aware of your connection to the people next to you and nominate a leader to guide you in some simple steps or in raising your arms up and down. Try to move together as one. Continue for as long as it feels comfortable.

If dancing is difficult for the participants or there is insufficient space sit and listen to the music, ask people to close their eyes and imagine they are dancing. Feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.



Prayers

We pray for the mission undertaken by members of the Mothers' Union around the world, for the Literacy and Development projects and the work to support impoverished families. Help us to do everything that we can to help this valuable work continue so that we can reach out as God's hands to those in need.

"The divine awakening produces in the soul of the perfect flame of love...that living flame which is the Holy Spirit Himself...this is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul that is transformed in love, that His interior actions cause it to send out flames...This flame wounds the soul as it is given, but the wound is tender, and, instead of causing death, it increases life..."

John of the Cross

Dear Lord,

Bless our work as we seek to show your love in our own families, the communities where we live and our family in Christ across the world.

Make us ready to proclaim your message of love, peace and hope and to be prepared to offer a voice of reason in the dissonance of modern life.

Let us be your willing conduits here on earth so that you can use us to fulfil your will in the world as we reach out in love to our brothers and sisters in need. Amen

Using our talents

Creative idea, finding Your Gift

Print and cut out the "Gifts of the Holy Spirit" cards below, ensuring you have enough for one for each person. These are just a few of the gifts of the spirit (you might like to add cards for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). On the day set up a table to one side as a prayer station with perhaps a lit candle and a copy of the Bible on it.

Read the Bible reading then invite everyone to come forward and take one of the "Gifts of the Holy Spirit" cards on the table.

Bible Reading, Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)

⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith;⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Once everyone has taken a gift of the Holy Spirit, say the prayer together:

Dear God,

We pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, and piety.

May we always feel the presence of

the Holy Spirit directing us and guiding us.

Help us to use the gifts that the Spirit offers

to help others who struggle with decisions in their own lives.

And may we do all this in love and service to you, O Lord. Amen



Prayers

We pray for the members who use their skills of needlework and knitting to create beautiful objects for our many projects. We thank God for their ability and pray that they continue to be able to provide these gifts that bring joy and pleasure to many.

God of love and of life,

May you help us discover where our strengths lie and give us the perception we need to discover the gifts that we possess.

We give thanks for the talents you have blessed us with and ask you to direct our lives in a way that best uses our own unique combination of gifts.

Give us the courage to show others the talents they have and help us serve others in the community and in so doing build up your kingdom.

We ask this through Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Wisdom

Wisdom - Saying and doing what is right and true, without fear or favour.

Wisdom in the Bible: I Kings 3:16-28
II Kings 5:1-14 Matthew 8:5-13

Make good use of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you, by following the example of Jesus, and of the heroes and Saints we read about in the Bible.

Knowledge

Knowledge - An awareness of the world, and how its parts fit together.

Knowledge in the Bible: Matthew 22:23-33
Luke 10:25-28 Genesis 41:15-36

Make good use of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you, by following the example of Jesus, and of the heroes and Saints we read about in the Bible.

Understanding

Understanding - Being able to see things from the other person's point of view, and being able to see all aspects of a question, and having an appreciation for cause and effect.

Understanding in the Bible: Mark 2:1-12
Ruth 1:3-18 Luke 10:38-42

Make good use of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you, by following the example of Jesus, and of the heroes and Saints we read about in the Bible.

Piety

Piety (Reverence) - Loyalty and faithfulness to God, and the ability to change our behaviour and our opinions based on what we learn about God from the Church.

Piety in the Bible: Acts 16:16-34
Acts 2:43-47

Make good use of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you, by following the example of Jesus, and of the heroes and Saints we read about in the Bible.

Counsel

Counsel (Right Judgment) - Knowing what to say to people when they are in difficult circumstances, and knowing how to deal with difficult people.

Counsel in the Bible: Acts 5:17, 27-39
Acts 8:26-38 Daniel 13:15-62

Make good use of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you, by following the example of Jesus, and of the heroes and Saints we read about in the Bible.

Fortitude

(Courage) - The ability to face up to and overcome our fears. The ability to plough through difficulties without losing hope.

Fortitude in the Bible: Acts 4:1-22
Acts 9:10-19

Make good use of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you, by following the example of Jesus, and of the heroes and Saints we read about in the Bible.

Family life

⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. *Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV)*

Creative idea, thinking about relationships

Below is a blank photo montage for you to fill in. Quietly and prayerfully reflect on the relationships (past and present) that are and that have been significant to you.

Now write some of those people's names in the any of the blank shapes.

- Who do you need to affirm or thank?
- Who do you need to get in touch with?
- Who do you need to forgive?
- Who needs your peace?

If you have time later in the week you could make a new photo album or sort out old ones. Spend time in prayer with the photos of those who matter to you – they are God's gift to you.

Resource taken from, "Seasons of my soul, conversations in the second half of life" Published by Methodist Publishing 2014. ISBN 9781858523989

Prayers

We pray for the members who support the Diocesan project at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford; remembering those that help the families whilst their young baby is in hospital and those who provide the toiletries that enable them to stay close to their loved one.

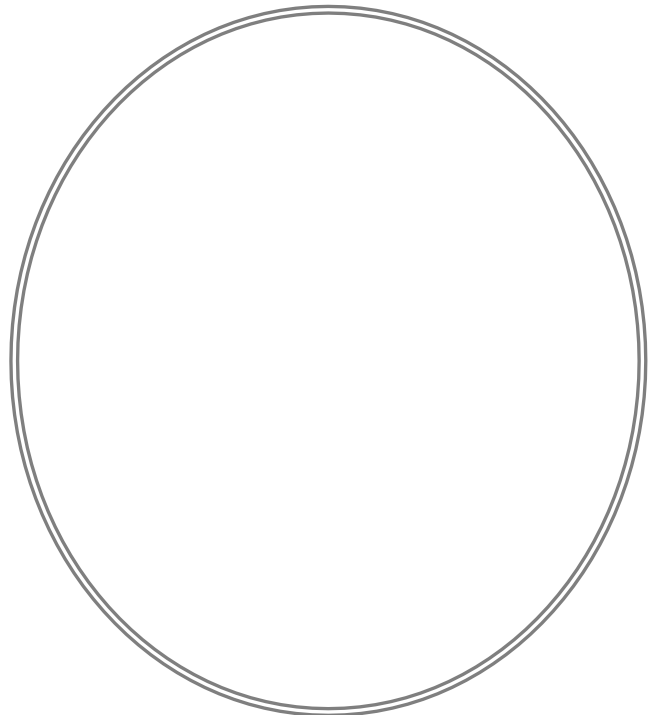
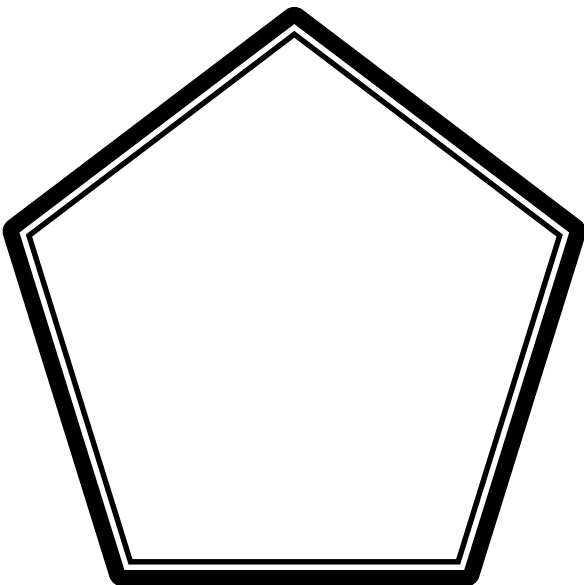
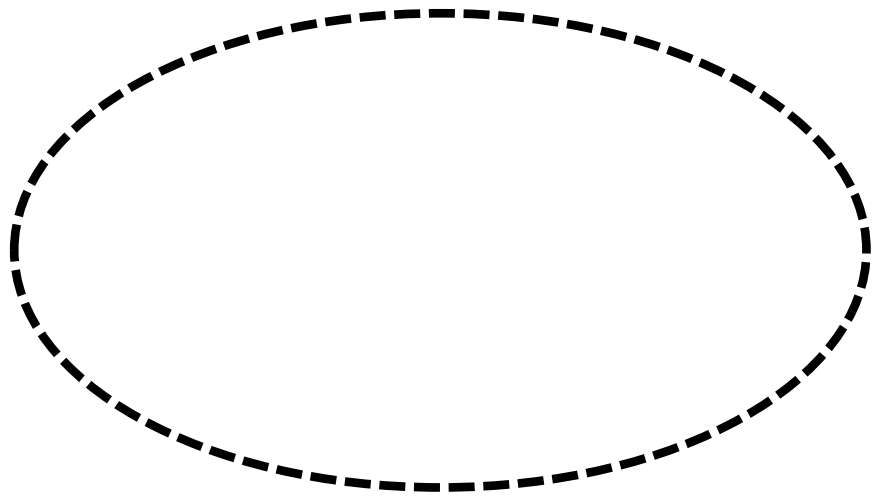
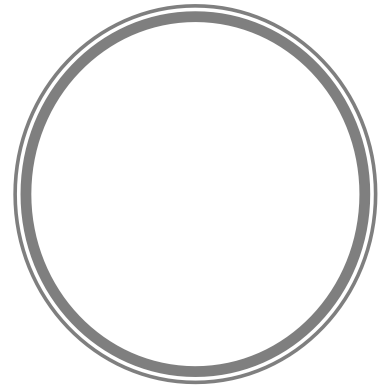
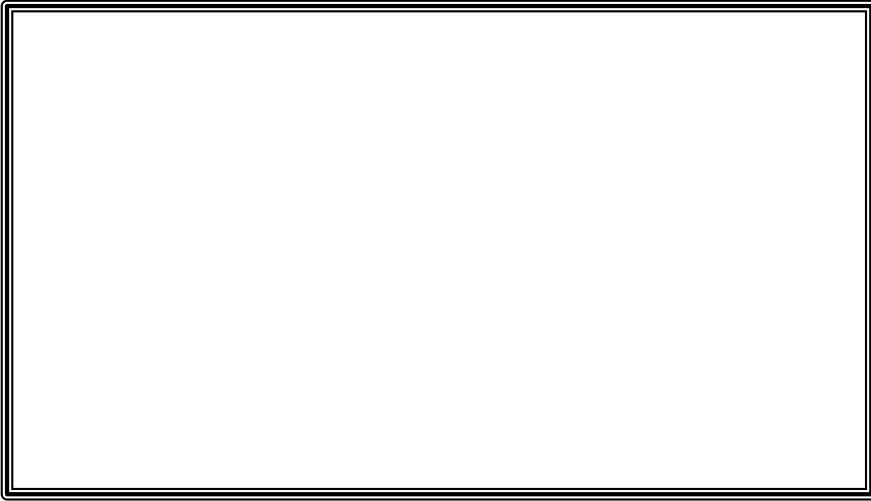
A Prayer for Children

Loving God,
your Son told his disciples
to become like little children.
Lead us to work for the welfare
and protection of all young people.
May we respect their dignity
that they may flourish in life,
following the example of the same
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

A Prayer for Family Life

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 our Lord.
Amen.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/topical-prayers/prayers-for-family-life-and-children.aspx>



Holidays

¹¹ The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. *Isaiah 58:11(NIV)*

Creative idea, write a postcard to God

Write a postcard to God thanking him for all the happy times that you have shared with family and friends this year. Think of the places you have visited. If you haven't been able to go away on holiday, remember all the fun that you have had in past years.

You can use the template below to print some onto white card or purchase blank postcards from The Works, Rymans or W.H. Smiths.

Prayers

We pray for our "Away From It All" holidays, for those who organise them and the people who take the holidays. Help us to find new ways to raise the funds to run the schemes in future and to reach out to families in need.

Lord God,

We pray that you will bless us and our families during these special months of summer.

May our homes be places of relaxation, joy, love and peace.

Help us to be considerate and kind, thinking about others and helping everyone enjoy the blessings that come from you in summertime.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Summer Prayer

Creator of all, thank You for summer!

Thank You for the warmth of the sun and the increased daylight.

Thank You for the beauty I see all around me and for the opportunity to be outside and enjoy Your creation.

Thank You for the increased time I have to be with my friends and family, and for the more casual pace of the summer season.

Draw me closer to You this summer.

Teach me how I can pray no matter where I am or what I am doing.

Warm my soul with the awareness of Your presence, and light my path with Your Word and Counsel.

As I enjoy Your creation, create in me a pure heart and a hunger and a thirst for You. Amen.

© Source unknown

Dear God,



Father God
In Heaven

Thank you for being here

Dear God,



Father God
In Heaven

Thank you for being here

Dear God,



Father God
In Heaven

Thank you for being here

Harvest

⁹“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19:9-10 (NIV)

Creative idea, guess the number of seeds

You will need one apple and a knife to cut it open

Hold up an apple and ask everyone how many seeds there might be inside it. Cut the apple open and count the seeds to discover who guessed correctly.

All of these seeds have the potential to grow into an apple tree and produce fruit of their own.

In the parable of the sower, Luke 8:4-15, Jesus teaches that the seed is like the Word of God. In the right situation it will grow and flourish.

Have a discussion about who first told them about Jesus, who sowed the first seed. Thank God for all these people, e.g. parents, friends, Sunday school leaders, church leaders.

Our faith calls us to love one another and to share what we have been given because everything comes from God.



Prayers

We pray for the people who are hungry and will not eat properly today. May we find ways to support those who run food share schemes in our communities.

O Lord our God,
We pray that the seed we sow
today will bring a harvest that
causes continued dew upon the
earth to sustain the seed in our hands.

May we always have seed to sow
and rejoice when we see the
transformation that reflects the image
of God in your people all over the world.

Amen. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/harvest-appeal>

Thanksgiving

I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High.

Psalm 7:17 (NIV)

Creative idea, starting a branch, "Please and Thank You Book"

Use an A4 notebook and ask people to add the names, situations and projects that are on their minds and hearts at the moment. As well as requests, think of things to be grateful for and thank God for answering our prayers. The prayers within it can be gathered together by the person leading the prayers holding the book and saying:

Dear Lord,

You always know whatever is uppermost in our hearts, we ask that you will hold the petitions written in this book within your loving hands and intervene to help those in need. We give thanks that you always answer our prayers and we trust in the knowledge that your ways in all things are perfect.

Amen

The book could be made available at subsequent meetings. Alternatively slips of paper using the following template could be provided and these made into a prayer collage.

Prayers

Please pray for our Diocesan projects and give thanks for the generous resources that have been provided in terms of people, time, commitment and donations.

Dear God,

We love you and we need you, this day and every day.

Thank you for your blessings in our lives,

Thank you for your great love and for all your goodness to us.

May we always be willing to give you thanks and praise.

Amen.

Father God,

Teach me to be joyful always, to pray continually and to give thanks whatever my circumstances. Help me to accept them as your will for my life and to adopt an attitude of humility and thankful acceptance. I want to grow ever closer to you and I know that your truth dwells in a thankful heart.

Amen

Please Lord,

Thank you Lord,

Please Lord,

Thank you Lord,

Please Lord,

Thank you Lord,

Remembrance

3 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
² a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,
³ a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
⁶ a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,
⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,
⁸ a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NIV)

Creative idea, "Hands up for peace"

Give everyone a piece paper and ask them to draw around their hand. Using scissors cut out the shape. Write on each paper hand a prayer for peace and harmony both in our own communities and around the world. Pray for an end to discord and conflict so that we can all live together peacefully as God intended from the beginning. Stick these prayers onto a large piece of card. Perhaps find a place in your church to display it and include an MU logo.



Prayers

We remember all those who work to bring peace and reconciliation. We pray that the MU can continue to be a voice of reason in society and actively participate in all that makes for peace.

Dear Lord,

We thank you for our family and friends – help us to remember the lonely.

We thank you for the food we enjoy - help us to remember the hungry.

We thank you for our health –help us to remember the sick.

May these remembrances stir us into active service, so that your gifts to us may be used to help others.

Amen

Lord God of the nations,

Whose sovereign rule brings justice and peace,

have mercy on our broken and divided world.

Pour out your peace into the hearts of all,

that all races and peoples may learn to live

as members of one family in obedience to your law,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/3774/remembrance_resources.pdf

Reg charity no: 249723 **MU Office**, CMS House, Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6BZ www.muoxford.org.uk