AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 15th March 2026
Mothering Sunday

compiled by Dean James - Worship Leader

On this Mothering Sunday we give thanks for the mothering of mothers, for the mothering of fathers and for the mothering of God and God's people in and through the church.

If a child lives with criticism, they learn to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, they learn to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, they learn to be shy.
If a child lives with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

In the journey of faith, we come to recognise the nurturing nature of God's love. Just as those who mother us provide guidance through life's challenges, God's love sustains and nurtures us, reminding us that we are never alone. This divine support helps us grow, heals our wounds, and encourages us to flourish in our lives. We can find peace and assurance knowing that we have a loving God who cares for us deeply.

If a child lives with tolerance, they learn to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement, they learn confidence.
If a child lives with praise, they learn to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, they learn justice.
If a child lives with security, they learn to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, they learn to like themself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, they learn to find love in the world.

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." - 1 John 4:9-10

Hymn

1] Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

2] O let it freely burn,
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

3] And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace,
till Love create a place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

Richard F. Littledale (1872-1958)

Prayers

Loving God, Thank you for mothers and children and for the joy of family life, both natural and our church family. Be with those who are grieving because they have no mother; Be close to those who are struggling because they were not able to have children; Be near to those who are sad because they are far apart from those they love. Let your love be present in every home and help your church to have eyes to see and ears to hear the needs of all who come to worship this day and every week.

God of love we give thanks for the life that you have brought to birth in us. We give thanks for your steadfast love for each of us, your children, that you sustain us and support us throughout our lives. We give thanks for the church which nourishes us and enables us to grow. We give thanks for the gift of those who love us, and those whom we love. Loving God, thank you for your tender care. We recognise that our independence of spirit, and our desire to make our own way in the world,

have sometimes taken us far from you; and we acknowledge the many ways that we have pushed you away. We are sorry for those times when we have turned our faces away from your loving gaze. So today, trusting in your unconditional acceptance, we open our lives to the light of your love; and we ask that you will forgive us those dark places in our lives where we have tried to keep you out, and ourselves hidden.

Help us today to hear you calling us once again, speaking words of love, forgiveness, and acceptance.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
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

Hymn: Psalm 23

1] The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leadeth me
the quiet waters by

2] My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
ev'n for his own name's sake.

3] Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill:
For thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

4] My table thou hast furnishèd
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

5] Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me,
And in God's house forever more
My dwelling place shall be.

Francis Rous (1579-1659)

1 Thessalonians 2: 2-13

You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted

with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed - God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Reflection

Mothering Sunday, what does it mean to us? It has evolved over the years; from the time when people would return to their "Mother Church" during Lent to when those in service and apprenticeships went home to their mothers with gifts such as hand-picked flowers. Now it has become far more commercialised and may have lost some of original meaning. It would now be rare for people to return to their mother church on this Sunday, the fourth Sunday in Lent. But, Mothering Sunday is a time for us all to recognise the importance of not only those who have cared for and mothered us in some way during our lives, but also the importance of the care and guidance of God through the Church of Christ.

Paul writes to the Church in Thessalonica, "Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well". I hope that we have all known people like this in our Christian life. As humans' connection is very important, but the level of Christian connection to which we are called is extraordinary, because Christ gave us a new commandment to form connection with others in a radical way. He commanded us to love others as he loved his disciples, as he loves us. And if we look at that love, it's not an insipid, weak, half-hearted and vague desire to do a little good where we can but a radical call to love others – all others. And we are called to love practically…as we celebrate the blessing of mothering and of those who have mothered us today, we recall Jesus' mothering of those around him. He touched people, he fed them, he washed their feet…he practically cared for people. We follow a saviour who spoke of himself using the image of a mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings. That's the sort of connection of love we're called to live out too.

Just as Paul and the first apostles gave themselves to share the gospel message in the early church, so we are called to give ourselves so that our churches and chapels become a place of love and care for all who are in need of real human connection. Loving Jesus costs, in following him we are called to emulate the self-giving of a mother for her children, the self-giving love of Christ that took him to the cross to die for you and for me.

Whether Mothering Sunday is a happy day for you or a time of sadness or regret - we have a saviour who walked in our footsteps and understood the complexity of human love and human relationships. I hope that today we can remember all the love we have received and be able to leave at the foot of the cross all that is of hurt and of sorrow. May we find a renewed connection as people of faith, privileged to be called the body of Christ, called to be the family of the Church and to be in connection with each other through times of joy, as well as times of challenge and of hardship. Being in solidarity with others in weakness, in brokenness, in woundedness can lead us to the centre of joy, which lies in sharing our humanity with others'. In doing this we can find encouragement, comfort and peace from our God who calls us into His kingdom and glory. Amen

Prayers of Intercession

God of love, we give thanks for your steadfast love for each of us, your children.
We thank you that you never turn your face from us, and that your gaze is ever of love and not despair.

God of love, We pray for all those who struggle with the responsibilities of childcare, and we commit to your loving protection all those whose parents have failed them, we pray for those who seek to provide care and nurturing where others have been unable to. We pray for adopted parents, for stepparents, for foster carers, social workers, May they discover in their role, the love that you extend through them to those in their care.

God of love, we give thanks that you sustain us and support us throughout our lives.
We thank you for those who us keep healthy and those who care for us when we face illness. We pray for nurses and doctors, for hospice workers and hospital chaplains, and for all those who work in healthcare. We pray today for those who are reaching the end of their lives, and for those who are very ill.
Give comfort and assurance in place of fear and doubt and hold in your love all those who long for your loving touch.

God of love, We pray for our world. In a world that seems so unstable You are the one who remains constant and You are the one in whom we put our trust. Lord, we lift to you all the places and situations that trouble us. Be with those who seek peace and justice.

God of love, We pray for one another; with all our diverse needs and cares and joys and sorrows. May we experience your love for us as we discover our mutual love for one another. Help us to discern one another's needs, and to be active in carrying one another's burdens. Amen

Hymn

1] Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

2] Of his deliverance I will boast,
till all that are distressed,
from my example comfort take
and lay their griefs to rest.

3] O magnify the LORD with me,
exalt his holy name;
when in distress to him I called,
He to my rescue came.

4] The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliverance he affords to all
who in his promise trust.

5] O taste and see that he is good;
experience will decide
how blest are they, and only they
who in the LORD confide.

6] Fear him, you saints, and you will then
have nothing else to fear;
make serving him your sole delight,
your wants shall be his care.

Nahum Tate (1652-1715)
and Nicholas Brady (1639-1726)

Blessing

Father God, We thank You for all who care for us and who show us what it means to love.
Grant them and us strength in times of weariness, wisdom in moments of uncertainty, and grace when faced with challenges. May the peace of Christ reign in all hearts and overflow into the lives of those we love and those we find it hard to love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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