

## Worship at Home – 15 March 2026

A short act of worship on Mothering Sunday, for use in people's homes, prepared by  
Mary Armstrong.

**Introduction:** On Mothering Sunday it is natural for most of us to recall our own mothers and all they did to nurture and support us. We may also remember others who took on different kinds of 'mothering' roles during our growing up, such as grandmothers and other relatives, teachers, ministers and other mentors, and God of course.

Let us therefore praise God who is like a good mother to us, and whom the Prophet Hosea likened to a mother with her children. God loved the people of Israel even when they were disobedient, as we see in Hosea Chapter 11, when God said -

"When Israel was a child, I loved him.....Yet it was I who taught (the tribe of) Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love, I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.'  
Nurturing God, we come to worship and thank you for all that you have done in our lives.

### Call to worship

Loving God, you father us  
and mother us all our days.  
Even before we acknowledged you  
you loved us;

in the secret places of our lives  
you nourish us,  
offering us all that we need  
to grow as human beings.

No matter how often  
we desert you  
you never turn your face away from us,  
and your concern

is always for our good.

You weep for us,  
you laugh with us,  
you rejoice in our successes  
and are saddened by our pain.  
Yours are the arms  
reaching out to cradle us  
in our final moments.

Loving, mothering God,  
strong and tender, tried and true,  
we worship you today.  
Amen

### Opening prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you as we celebrate Mothering Sunday; a chance to express thankfulness and joy as we remember our own mothers or those who mothered us throughout our lives.

For all who have held us and fed us, cared for us and comforted us, challenged and encouraged us, we give thanks.

We also remember and pray for those whose experience of being mothered was not a good one, and for whom today will be difficult because of hurt, grief and even anger. We ask that your unfailing love will surround them and that they will feel your presence in their lives. Amen.

**Hymn: Singing the Faith 611<sup>1</sup> *Brother, sister, let me serve you***

- |   |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                       |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Brother, sister, let me serve you,<br>let me be as Christ to you ;<br>pray that I may have the grace<br>to let you be my servant too.            | when you laugh I'll laugh with<br>you ;<br>I will share your joy and sorrow<br>till we've seen this journey<br>through. |                                                                                                                                       |
| 2 | We are pilgrims on a journey,<br>and companions on the road ;<br>we are here to help each other<br>walk the mile and bear the load.              | 5                                                                                                                       | When we sing to God in heaven<br>we shall find such harmony,<br>born of all we've known together<br>of Christ's love and agony.       |
| 3 | I will hold the Christ-light for you<br>in the night-time of your fear ;<br>I will hold my hand out to you,<br>speak the peace you long to hear. | 6                                                                                                                       | Brother, sister, let me serve you,<br>let me be as Christ to you ;<br>pray that I may have the grace<br>to let you be my servant too. |
| 4 | I will weep when you are<br>weeping ;                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                       |

Richard A. M. Gillard (b. 1953) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 611

Words and Music: © 1977 Scripture in Song (a division of Integrity Inc.), Administered by Song Solutions CopyCare, 14 Horsted Square, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1QG. <[www.songsolutions.org](http://www.songsolutions.org)> Used by permission.

**Prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness**

Nurturing God, we praise you for the way in which you care for each one of us. Like a good parent, you love us whoever we are, whatever we do.

Even though we frequently disappoint you, you are always there, concerned for our welfare, forgiving us.

Nurturing God, we praise and thank you. Forgive us for the times that we take you for granted, when we do things to hurt others, particularly members of our family and friends.

Nurturing God, forgive us. Forgive us for running away, for getting so involved in the activities and concerns of our lives that we forget that you are there.

Despite our many failings we know that through the cross we are healed and restored. Nurturing God, we thank and praise you.

## **Bible reading: Luke 15:11-32**

*The Parable of the Lost Son* <sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

<sup>13</sup> “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. <sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ <sup>20</sup> So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

<sup>21</sup> “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

<sup>22</sup> “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

<sup>28</sup> “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

<sup>31</sup> “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

**Reflection on the reading:** Today's Gospel reading is very familiar. If we look at how the father reacts with his sons, we learn about being a parent, both good and bad.

He worries about his son while he is away and watches anxiously for his return.

When he sees him coming, he runs to greet him and kills the fattened calf, saved for a special occasion, to celebrate his return.

Whatever the son has done to hurt and disappoint him, he still loves, supports and forgives him. Good parents are like that. God is like that.

But the father also has his faults, like most of us. In this instance, he initially neglects to reassure his eldest son that he loves him too, effectively taking him for granted.

In his joy at the younger son's return, he doesn't think of the effect this might have on his elder son. Like most parents he is not perfect.

Because we ourselves sometimes have difficult relationships with our parents or our children, then it is helpful to see God highlighting the faults of the father in this story. Also, just as the father forgave his penitent younger son, so God forgives us, when we don't get things quite right. Even when we let God down, He still loves us. As a good parent does, God forgives us. God is a pattern to us when we try to be good parents or children. God is a pattern for all our relationships with other people. God shows us unconditional love.

**Hymn Singing the Faith 712<sup>2</sup>** *Put peace into each other's hands.*

1 Put peace into each other's  
hands

and like a treasure hold it,  
protect it like a candle-flame,  
with tenderness enfold it.

2 Put peace into each other's  
hands

with loving expectation ;  
be gentle in your words and ways,  
in touch with God's creation.

3 Put peace into each other's  
hands

like bread we break for sharing ;

look people warmly in the eye :  
our life is meant for caring.

4 As at Communion, shape your  
hands

into a waiting cradle ;  
the gift of Christ receive, revere,  
united round the table.

5 Put Christ into each other's  
hands,

he is love's deepest measure ;  
in love make peace, give peace a  
chance,

and share it like a treasure.

Fred Kaan (1929–2009) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 712

Words: © 1989, Stainer & Bell Ltd, 23 Gruneisen Road, London N3 1DZ <[www.stainer.co.uk](http://www.stainer.co.uk)>

**Prayers for ourselves and for the world:** Nurturing God, who gave us an example of unconditional love, we give thanks for our parents, families and friends. Thank you

for those who care for us in so many ways, and who are willing to forgive and encourage us.

As children of a loving God who always listens to our cries, let us pray together.

On this day of celebration and praise, we are thankful for the many people who have mothered us and nurtured us to grow in faith and wisdom. Be with the mothers, mother-figures, grandmothers and great-grandmothers among us.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for foster mothers, adoptive mothers, stepmothers and all those who give love to children from their hearts. For all those who mother in so many ways, we give you thanks, and ask that you continue to strengthen them with your grace and knowledge.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for all parents and caregivers around the world, especially those who are struggling to find food, shelter and security for their children. We pray for families devastated and separated by war and disaster. We think especially of the people of Iran and throughout the Middle East in this time of deep distress. We also continue to keep in our prayers the people of Ukraine and Russia and the seemingly endless suffering as a result of that war.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for those mourning the loss of loved ones, for those who are injured, imprisoned, or afraid, and for those seeking justice, freedom, and dignity. Surround them with Your love.

We pray for peace and reconciliation wherever there is brokenness.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for children and young people throughout the world, remembering particularly those who are in need of mothers and mentors in their lives; and lifting to your tender mercy all those who are struggling with issues of identity: may they know they are loved for who they are and may the world learn to celebrate diversity.

Be with all our young people as they make decisions that will affect their lives; help them to make good choices. we pray.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

Loving God, we pray for those who find Mothering Sunday a difficult day, those who have had difficult experiences of their mother or father, or whose family life has often seen conflict, bitterness or recrimination, assure them of your love and bring them healing and comfort.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

You gather us as your children.  
You comfort and hold us in your warm embrace.  
When we hurt, your arms enfold us.  
When we are afraid your wings protect us.  
Nourish and restore us now we pray, in your name.

We take a moment to lift the prayers of our own hearts before God .

Thankful for the love that you bless us with, and hopeful in the promise of grace continued, we lift these prayers to you.  
Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

Let us say **The Lord's Prayer** together.

Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your Name  
Your kingdom comes  
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

**Hymn: Singing the Faith 526<sup>3</sup>** *Lord of all hopefulness.*

1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of  
all joy,  
whose trust, ever childlike, no  
cares could destroy,  
be there at our waking, and give  
us, we pray,  
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at  
the break of the day.

2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all  
faith,  
whose strong hands were skilled  
at the plane and the lathe,  
be there at our labours, and give  
us, we pray,  
your strength in our hearts, Lord,  
at the noon of the day.

3 Lord of all kindness, Lord of all  
grace,  
your hands swift to welcome, your  
arms to embrace,  
be there at our homing, and give  
us, we pray,  
your love in our hearts, Lord, at  
the eve of the day.

4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all  
calm,  
whose voice is contentment,  
whose presence is balm,  
be there at our sleeping, and give  
us, we pray,  
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at  
the end of the day.

## **Blessing and dismissal**

May God the Father be always there for you.  
May God the Son, be your brother when you need a brother.  
May God the Holy Spirit, love you like a sister,  
and may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
Amen.

Sisters and brothers,  
both young and old,  
We go in the peace of Christ!  
Thanks be to God.

## **Amen**

1. Richard A M Gillard (b. 1953) © 1977 Scripture in Song
2. Fred Kaan (1929-2009) © 1989 Stainer & Bell Ltd
3. Jan Struther (Joyce Placzek) 1901-1953) © 1971 Celebration, The Company of Celebration
4. All prayer material © 2002-2026 ROOTS for Churches Ltd
5. Bible Verses from New International Version® Anglicized, NIV® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblical, Inc.® CCLI Licence number 54165.