

MOTHERS' UNION MIDDAY PRAYERS

FOR JANUARY 2026

Theme – Wonder and gratitude – looking back and looking forward

Reflection for – Wonder and gratitude (reflection from the Prayer Diary 2026)

As we begin this new year, we are full of wonder and gratitude! 150 years ago, Mary Sumner had a vision of women supporting and encouraging each other in their faith and families. The ripples have gone out over those years – to 4 million members in 84 countries, changing families and communities. One woman in one parish began it all.

One small boy had a picnic – but in the hands of Jesus, it fed a multitude, with 12 baskets of leftovers - nothing was wasted! In His hands, every small offering of service and prayer from each of us is used and multiplied, and nothing is wasted.

Monday – the need

'When Jesus looked out and saw that a large crowd had arrived, he said to Philip, 'Where can we buy bread to feed these people?' He said this to stretch Philip's faith. He already knew what he was going to do.' John 6:5-6. And the other Gospels say Jesus told the disciples to feed them!

Creator God – we thank you for this wonderful world, with enough for everyone. As we see the inequalities and desperate need in so many places, near and far, we are sorry for the ways our greed or laziness impact and add to these huge problems and tragedies. Forgive us, dear Lord.

We pray for those who are hungry...homeless...afraid...

Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayers.

We pray for those in authority and power – for justice and compassion to guide them...

Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayers.

We pray for those who need to hear that you love them...

Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayers.

Thank you that you know what you are going to do, Lord – that the whole world, and all people, really are in your loving hands.

We are amazed and grateful as we look back, and full of faith and hope as we look forward. Amen

Tuesday – the overwhelm

'Philip answered, 'Two hundred silver pieces wouldn't be enough to buy bread for each person to get a piece.' John 6:7 (The Message)

In Mark 'That would take more than half a year's wages! Are WE (emphasis mine!) to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?'

Father God – the size of the problems facing the world, facing our lands, facing our communities and

even facing our families and ourselves...they're just overwhelming. We feel paralysed by the enormity of the needs and concerns. As the disciples reacted with 'it's not possible' – 'it's not practical' – and even a feeling of 'that just wouldn't be fair – you couldn't ask that of us!' – so do we react. Forgive us, dear Lord.

We pray that we would be changed by the Holy Spirit – to become more like Jesus as we respond to the needs, close to home and across the world. Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Thank you that you know what you are going to do, Lord – that the whole world, and all people, really are in your loving hands.

We are amazed and grateful as we look back, and full of faith and hope as we look forward. Amen

Wednesday – the small offering

'One of the disciples – it was Andrew, brother to Simon Peter – said, 'There's a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But that's a drop in the bucket for a crowd like this.' John 6:8-9 (The Message)

Dear Lord, how that little boy might have felt that day: embarrassed to be singled out in front of everyone, ready to be mocked for such a small offering; or eager to simply give what he had, somehow understanding that this man could do something wonderful with it?

We often feel that anything we have to offer is too small or will be ineffectual – an invisible drop in a huge bucket. But offered over into your hands, every action, word or prayer will be used by you and useful to you. Forgive our lack of courage and faith, dear Lord. We pray for ourselves and all those who follow you to grasp the importance of our words, deeds and prayers –

Thank you that you know what you are going to do, Lord – that the whole world, and all people, really are in your loving hands.

We are amazed and grateful as we look back, and full of faith and hope as we look forward. Amen

Thursday – obedience and blessing

'Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' There was a nice carpet of green grass in this place. They sat down, about five thousand of them. Then Jesus took the bread and, having given thanks, gave it to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish. All ate as much as they wanted.' John 6:10-11 (The Message)

Luke and Matthew say there were 5,000 MEN – and Matthew adds, 'besides women and children' – this was a massive crowd of hungry people who had followed Jesus to hear him speak.

Almighty God, in this account – so familiar and still so amazing – we see your power in your Son.

The people settled and sat. Jesus looked to you and then broke the small loaves and divided the little fish. The disciples obeyed and played their part – distributing the food to the people. And every person had their needs met – they ‘all ate as much as they wanted’.

We pray so often, as he taught us, ‘give us today our daily bread’, and we thank you, Lord. We pray for those in the world who are hungry – or worry where the next meal is coming from... Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayer. We pray for all people, charities and agencies throughout the world who provide food and shelter for those who are displaced or homeless... Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Thank you that you know what you are going to do, Lord – that the whole world, and all people, really are in your loving hands.

We are amazed and grateful as we look back, and full of faith and hope as we look forward. Amen

Friday – nothing is wasted

‘When the people had eaten their fill, he said to his disciples, ‘Gather the leftovers so nothing is wasted.’ They went to work and filled twelve large baskets with leftovers from the five barley loaves.’ John 6:12-13 (The Message)

Lord Jesus Christ, in our lives and ways of living – we do waste: opportunities, resources, food, time. Please forgive us and help us. Thank you that sometimes the best meals are made from leftovers! Thank you that with you, nothing is wasted – that you know every tear that falls – every hardship endured. You have plans to give us hope and a future with you.

Thank you that you know what you are going to do, Lord – that the whole world, and all people, really are in your loving hands.

We are amazed and grateful as we look back, and full of faith and hope as we look forward. Amen

Saturday – God at work

‘The people realized that God was at work among them in what Jesus had just done.’ John 6:14 (The Message)

Dear Lord, so often I have to look back to see how you have been at work in the world and in my life. I’m so slow to see you in action in the here and now! Forgive me and keep my eyes and heart open to you. Thank you for your constant hand on the world you made – for your care and provision, your forgiveness and inspiration. We want to be like the disciples in this wonderful story – maybe sometimes we’re overwhelmed – but we commit to follow you and obey you, with the privilege of being your hands and feet in the world today.

As Mary Sumner followed your guidance and inspiration 150 years ago – and as the little boy handed over everything he had – help us to do the same.

Freely, freely we have received. May we freely, freely, give.

Thank you that you know what you are going to do, Lord – that the whole world, and all people, really are in your loving hands.

We are amazed and grateful as we look back, and full of faith and hope as we look forward. Amen

Final Blessing Prayer

(monthly prayer from the Prayer Diary 2026)

God of every moment, we pause with wonder at the journey behind us, the grace that carried us, the lessons that shaped us, the beauty that we didn’t expect. With grateful hearts, we look ahead, trusting that the same love will guide our steps. Open our eyes to possibility, our hearts to purpose, and our lives to Your unfolding story. May we walk forward in faith, rooted in gratitude and filled with awe at what is about to come. Amen.

Wave of Prayer

1-3 January: All Mothers’ Union trustees and staff throughout the world

5-7 January: The Kingdom of Eswatini; Ruaha in Tanzania; Aguata & Lagos Mainland in Nigeria; Norwich in England and Chotanagpur in India

8-10 January: Lesotho; Kibungo in Rwanda; Etche & Ogbomoso in Nigeria; Leeds in England and Hanuato in Solomon Islands

12-14 January: Mauritius; Kericho in Kenya; Katsina in Nigeria; Kumasi in Ghana; Winchester in England and Nandyal in India

15-17 January: Seychelles; Bukedi in Uganda; Enugu in Nigeria; Birmingham in England and Marathwada in India

19-21 January: St Mark the Evangelist in South Africa; Butare in Rwanda; Okigwe-South in Nigeria; Gambia; British Columbia in Canada and Rajasthan in India

22-24 January: Egypt; Gasabo in Rwanda; Otukpo & On the Coast in Nigeria; Bathurst in Australia and Nasik in India

26-28 January: False Bay in South Africa; Shinyanga in Tanzania; Umuahia & Ijebu South West in Nigeria; Bath & Wells in England and Vellore in India

29-31 January: Masvingo in Zimbabwe; Kibondo in Tanzania; Nebbi in Uganda; Bida in Nigeria; Llandaff in Wales and Kanyakumari in India