



**Bethel United Order of Service  
March 30, 2025 – Lent 4**

**Introit**

**LENT**

**Welcome & Announcements**

Good morning and welcome to Bethel United Church in Rideau Ferry, Ontario. Today is March 30<sup>th</sup>, the fourth Sunday in Lent. We welcome all of you into this place, whether you are worshiping with us in our sanctuary, or from home through our Live Streaming.

This week, our service is being led by: Ruth Anne Johnson and our choir, Aidan Williamson, Kathleen Williamson and Sandra Walker.

A quick reminder of our regularly scheduled Bethel activities: Chat and Chew on Tuesdays at 1:30 and our Zoom Prayer and Share at 10am on Thursdays.

April 13<sup>th</sup> Bethel will hold its Annual Congregational meeting following a soup and sandwich lunch after worship. The agenda, minutes of February 18 2024 meeting, and Annual Report can be found on the website. If you need printed copies, please let me know. All are welcome to attend.

The UCW meets on Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 11am. Bring a bag lunch if you plan to stay for chat and chew.

If you have any questions about our weekly activities or meetings, you can access the calendar on our website: [www.bethelchurchrideauferry.ca](http://www.bethelchurchrideauferry.ca).

The calendar will appear on the first screen and has all of our activities listed.

The UCW and the Stewardship Committee's 2025 Lenten Project continues.

Our Lenten Project will provide support for the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital Foundation's current campaign to raise money for the purchase of a new cataract microscope for the Hospital.

This purchase will enhance the ability of local ophthalmic surgeons to provide cataract surgery locally reducing the need for local residents to travel to larger centres for this care.

**Ready for Pancakes?**

The Bethel 2025 Pancake Breakfast will take place on Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> from 8 - 11 a.m. (Ontario Maple Weekend). As always, much help will be needed to promote and carry out this special community activity. Please

spread the word amongst family and friends about this upcoming and always popular event. Thank you to everyone who has signed up to help that morning. What a great team you are! We will again be partnering with Oliver's Mapleworks and serving their delicious maple syrup.

Are there any birthdays or other celebrations this week? Where have you seen God at work this week?

Please join in singing a brief song of celebration:

**VU 958**

**"Halle, Halle, Halle"**

**Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Halle, halle, halle-lujah!**

**Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

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### **Land Acknowledgment (Unison)**

***For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples and acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.***

### **Mission and Service**

#### ***Breaking Barriers: Women in Theology and Leadership***

In India, social and cultural factors limit access to theological education for women in comparison to men. The Rev. B. Silpa Rani is actively encouraging women to pursue theological education and engage in leadership roles.

When Silpa started her first degree in Theology, she spent two years as the only woman in a class of 16. Now, years later, as she works on her doctoral dissertation, she has seen a gradual increase in the enrolment of women in theological programs. While this is encouraging, Silpa recognizes that there is still a long journey forward. While she seeks to empower modern women, she is also working to shed light on the experiences of women and minorities of the past.

Silpa was the recipient of a theological education scholarship, which paved her way to join the faculty at Bishop's College, Kolkata. She has been exploring the unique identity of the Qumran community within the context of the Dead Sea Scrolls. She is actively researching to identify the women, children, and minority groups of the society, drawing parallels between the Qumran context and contemporary Indian context.

Your Mission and Service gifts provide support to leaders like Silpa, who are actively working to empower women and change the world.

### **Call to Worship (Responsive)**

What does the Lord require of you?

**To do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with our God.**

What does God command of us?

**To love God with all our heart,  
and all our soul,  
and all our mind,  
and all our strength,  
and to love our neighbor as ourselves.**

God does not call us to ease or to comfort.

**But to presence, and abundance,  
and grace in our struggle.**

Let us worship the God who believes in us,  
and trusts in us, and abides with us.

**Let us worship the God who will ask much of us,  
but will be beside us every step of the way.**

### **Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle**

Today as we light our Christ Candle and our World Candle we recognize that we feel that at times life just doesn't seem to make sense. We question God. We say that life is not fair?

*A moment of self-reflection:* Do you feel close enough to God that you can question why things are happening in your life?

In the Gospel of Luke 27:46 it says, About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

### **Opening Prayer (Unison)**

***As we come to worship you this morning, give us: the strength, the wisdom, and the trust, to believe that you are always there with us. Remind us of your unending love and fill us with your peace. May our humble worship flow to you surrounded by our love. May your mercy and grace fill us. Amen***

### **Opening Hymn**

**VU 120**

**"O Jesus, I Have Promised"**

**<sup>1</sup> O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
remain for ever near me, my Saviour and my friend:  
I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.**

**2 O let me feel you near me: the world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;  
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;  
but, Jesus, then draw nearer and shield my soul from sin.**

**3 O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;  
now speak, and make me listen, O guardian of my soul.**

**4 O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you,  
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.  
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
O give me grace to follow, my Saviour and my friend.**

### **Passing the Peace**

#### **Prayer for Reconciliation (Unison)**

**God of compassion and mercy, you sent us your Son to tell us to love one another as much as you loved us. Yet, we struggle to love each other. We have a hard time loving those who are not like us, who disagree with us, or who ask us to face the truths about ourselves. You told us to love one another, because love is from God. And we often do not love those we think are different, hungry, lost, or undesirable. It is written that perfect love casts out fear, and yet we are afraid. Afraid for our safety, our wallets, and how others perceive us. Forgive us, God, and show us how to love the way you command us to love. Release us from our judgment and our fear. Open our hearts so that they might receive your perfect love for us and offer it to the world.**

*(Silent Confession)*

#### **Assurance of Love**

Friends, the good news is this: love and mercy are from God, and we are loved by God. God sent Christ into the world to reveal to us the unconditional love of God our Father and Mother. May God's forgiveness, make us whole. Amen

#### **Theme Conversation**

Can we say that "God is in control" and still believe in free-will? What about our role? Is only God merciful, or do we have a responsibility to be merciful.

## **Our Scriptures Today**

Acts 1: 6-11

### **Reflection**

***“Being an Agent of Mercy in the World”***

### **Hymn**

**MV 79**

***“Spirit, Open My Heart”***

***(chorus)***

**Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.  
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,  
Spirit, open my heart.**

**<sup>1</sup> God, replace my stony heart  
with a heart that’s kind and tender.  
All my coldness and fear  
to your grace I now surrender      *(chorus)***

**<sup>2</sup> Write your love upon my heart  
as my law, my goal, my story.  
In each thought, word, and deed,  
may my living bring you glory.      *(chorus)***

**<sup>3</sup> May I weep with those who weep,  
share the joy of sister, brother.  
In the welcome of Christ,  
may we welcome one another      *(chorus)***

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### **Invitation to the Offering**

As we come into our time of offering, we give thanks to God for the privilege of being able to share our finances, time and talents in order to build God’s Kingdom here on earth.

### **Offering Music**

#### **Offering Response**

**VU 542**

***“We Give You But Your Own”***

**We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;  
all that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.**

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#### **Offering Prayer (Unison)**

***We bring you only what is yours, Creator God, that you might use  
this offering, and those who give, for the building up of your  
kingdom on earth. May we sow mercy and love as a congregation  
and be a light to our world. Amen.***

## **Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer**

Prayer- Rev. Dave

Today, we have special prayers for:

Leona	Connie	Janet
Joy	Manfred	Chris
Helene	Rev. Lynne	Carol
Liam	Shannon	Dick
Maddi	Doreen	Grant
Joanne	Thelma	Kim
Abby	Betty	Choughik

And together as a community we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying, **Our Father...**

### **Closing Hymn      VU 651      "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah"**

**<sup>1</sup> Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art mighty, hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more,  
feed me till I want no more.**

**<sup>2</sup> Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield,  
be thou still my strength and shield.**

**<sup>3</sup> When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever give to thee,  
I will ever give to thee.**

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### **Living Our Faith This Week**

I challenge each of us this week to reach out and touch the leper. Show mercy to those who have hurt you. Pray for those who hold different views than us. Yes, even American Presidents. Let God's mercy and love take us out of our comfort zones.

## **Commissioning and Benediction**

### **Sung Benediction**

**Go now in peace, never be afraid,  
God will go with you each hour of everyday.  
Go now in faith, steadfast strong and true,  
Know God will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.  
God will be there, watching us in love.  
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.  
Amen. Amen. Amen**

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