



Bethel United Church September 14 2025

❖ All **bolded** text is a congregational response.

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning and welcome to Bethel United Church in Rideau Ferry, Ontario. Today is September 14, 2025, and Fourteenth Sunday of Pentecost. My name is Rev. Lynne Gardiner, and I welcome all of you into this place, whether you are worship with us in our sanctuary, or from home through our Live Streaming.

This week, our service is being led by: Paula Grenke, Aidan Williamson, Kathleen Williamson, and Barb Joynt.

A reminder that after worship today we will be holding our Board Meeting. All are welcome.

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. If you have any questions about our weekly activities, you can access a calendar on our website: www.bethelchurchrideauferry.ca. The calendar will appear on the first screen and has all of our activities listed.

We will be holding our Anniversary Service on September 28th. Rev. Debbie Steele will be our guest preacher and we will be receiving new members into the Bethel Family that Sunday. If you are interested in becoming a member, please see me so that we can include you in this celebration.

A BIG thank you to everyone who sponsored me for the Terry Fox Run! We raised a lot of money to help fight cancer. I truly appreciate your support. All the best, Aidan.

Hugh celebrated his birthday this past week, and Paul Coutts celebrates his birthday next weekend. Are there any other celebrations?

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

Please join in singing our celebration song:

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 Story

40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism

"Our congregation discussed the 40 Days program, and so many great, appreciative comments and learnings were shared. Implicit bias was an important learning that many commented on. We appreciate all the contributions and are delighted each day with new insights, prayers, and activities. Thank you!"

This reflection from a past participant captures just a glimpse of the transformation that happens during 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism. For forty days each fall, people from across Canada and beyond, inside and outside The United Church of Canada, step into a journey of learning, faith, and action.

It's not a quick or easy process. The conversations can be challenging. They invite participants to see where racism exists—in systems, in communities, and sometimes in their own assumptions—and to ask hard questions about what justice looks like in real life.

Every day offers something to help guide that work: prayers that center the heart, reflections that open new perspectives, videos and stories that bring real-life experiences to the forefront, and action steps that turn learning into tangible change. The resources are created by people from across the United Church—ministers, lay leaders, educators, and community members—who share from lived experience, deep study, and careful analysis.

It's not just about understanding racism; it's about dismantling it.

This year's program runs October 14 to November 28, 2025, with

- live online events with dynamic speakers every Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. ET;
- weekly short videos with accompanying reflections and action items; and
- downloadable resources for both groups and individuals.

While the 40 days create a season of engagement, the work does not end there. Resources remain available year-round so that individuals,

congregations, and community groups can keep learning, keep talking, and keep acting, because anti-racism is not a box to check, but a lifelong journey.

Your Mission and Service gifts make this vital work possible, 40 days at a time, and every day in between. Through your generosity, the United Church of Canada continues to move toward its vision of becoming an anti-racist church, and toward a world where every person is treated with dignity, equity, and love. Thank you.

Call to Worship (Responsive, based on Luke 15)

Tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus.

We draw near, knowing God welcomes all who are looking.

Like a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to search for one lost sheep,

Our God seeks us out with persistent, loving care.

Like a woman who lights a lamp and sweeps the house to find one lost coin,

Our God searches until we are found.

When the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he calls together friends and neighbors saying,

"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost!"

When the woman finds the lost coin, she calls together friends and neighbors saying,

"Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost!"

Jesus tells us there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

How much more should we rejoice when we gather as God's found people!

Come, let us worship the God who seeks the lost,

God who finds us and calls us home.

Sung Call to Worship

MV 18 (sing twice)

"Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary"

**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy tried and true;
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.**

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Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle

Today as we light our Christ Candle and our World Candle we consider what it means to be a people who have been called into Grace and Mercy.

A moment of silent reflection: Do you have any sense of God's Grace in your life? Can you express a sense of 'being lost' to God and now 'Being found'?

Listen to God's words for you this from 1st Timothy:

"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

Opening Prayer

Lord, in a broken and hurting world,
we come to worship you as people in need of repair.
Be with us as we worship you,
open our hearts and minds to your grace, love and forgiveness.
Amen.

Opening Hymn VU 288 "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

**¹ Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.**

***Refrain* Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!**

**² Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain***

**³ Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow -
wondrous the portion thy blessings provide. *Refrain***

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Passing the Peace

Prayer for Reconciliation

O God, so many of us feel lost these days but we are slow to admit that it is because we have strayed far from you.

We feel shame that our lives are not what they should be,
and so often we miss the mark.

Yet you teach us, Lord, that if we are following your way,
then we are enough.

Today, we set our feet again on the path
that leads to love and life, not death and self-destruction.

And we know, loving God, that you will welcome us,
And you are always waiting our return. Amen.

Assurance of Love

God, who seeks us when we are lost,
whose heart is ever hopeful for our return,
whose arms are always open to welcome us back:
we thank you for your forgiveness;
your rejoicing when we are found;
your love, which makes us feel worthy after all.
Amen.

Theme Conversation

Missing the Mark.

Our Scriptures Today

1 Timothy 1: 12-17

Luke 15: 1-10

Reflection

Hymn

MV 28 (vs 1, 3, 5)

"God of the Bible"

**¹ God of the Bible, God in the Gospel,
hope seen in Jesus, hope yet to come,
you are our centre, daylight or darkness,
freedom or prison, you are our home.**

***Refrain* Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.**

**³ Those without status, those who are nothing,
you have made royal, gifted with rights,
chosen as partners, midwives of justice,
birthing new systems, lighting new lights, *Refrain***

**⁵ Hope we must carry, shining and certain
through all our turmoil, terror and loss,
bonding us gladly one to the other,
till our world changes facing the cross. *Refrain***

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Invitation to the Offering

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 Prayers

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer (responsive)

In a world where the people of Ukraine and Gaza live in constant fear of tanks and bombs; of starvation and death.

Loving Lord,

**Give us eyes to see, ears to hear,
and mouths to speak out words of peace and justice.**

In our own country where foodbanks are struggling to meet demand;
where housing prices sky-rocket;
where parents mourn children stabbed or shot in street crimes or in their own homes.

Loving Lord,

**Give us eyes to see, ears to hear,
and mouths to speak out words of peace and justice.**

In the church where people seek companionship and friendship with those of their own age;
where we are challenged to be faithful discipleships;
where we are called upon to serve the present age in a relevant and up-to-date way.

Loving Lord,

**Give us eyes to see, ears to hear,
and mouths to speak out words of peace and justice.**

To our government as they face the challenges of our times,
and attempt to govern with equity and compassion.

Loving Lord,

**Give us eyes to see, ears to hear,
and mouths to speak out words of peace and justice.**

In our lives where we are struggling because of health issues, physical or mental;
where we are fearful of the cost of living crisis and its effect upon us;
where the impact of pressure and stress is often unseen and unnoticed.

Loving Lord,

**Give us eyes to see, ears to hear,
and mouths to speak out words of peace and justice**

Today, we have special prayers for:

Joy	Janet	Sue N.	Bev
Myles	Carol	Norma	Kim
Liam	Dick	Rev. Myra	Mark
Joanne	Rev. Arlyce	David	
Abby	Bill M.	Jim	

And together as a community, we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us so long ago: **"Our Father....."**

Closing Hymn

VU 238

"How Great Thou Art"

**¹ O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed.**

***Refrain* Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!**

**² When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze. *Refrain***

**³ But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin. *Refrain***

**⁴ When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, 'My God, how great thou art!' *Refrain***

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Living our Faith this Week

This week, take some time each day and do an 'inventory' of your day. Where do you need to make things right with your neighbour or your loved one? Where do you need to make things right with God? Then take the time to pray, to ask for forgiveness with both your loved one and with God, and then move forward in Grace.

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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