

**Bethel United Church
April 12 2026**



JOHN 20:21

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Bethel United Church in Rideau Ferry Ontario. Today is April 12th and the second Sunday of Easter. My name is Rev. Lynne Gardiner and I am pleased to welcome all of you into this place of worship, whether you are worshiping with us virtually, or in person.

This week, our service is being led by: our choir, Aidan Williamson, Kathleen Williamson, and Lynne Evans. This week, because we don't have a regular musician helping us out, our music will be very simplified and will be tunes where we repeat in a style known as Taizé. Let's see how this experiment works for all of us!

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

The Annual Congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, April 19th following the worship service.

The UCW will meet on Tuesday, April 14th at 11am, followed by a pot luck lunch with guests from Trinity UCW..

Are there any celebrations 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.

Minute for Mission Story

Anchored in Every Season

In Tobermory, Ontario, the town pulses with the seasons. Summer brings busy roads, kayaks on the harbour, and lively streets. Winter brings quiet and long stretches of stillness. Through it all, Tobermory United Church remains a steady, welcoming presence at the northern edge of the Bruce Peninsula.

The building is more than a church. It hosts drumming circles, Tai Chi, bridge games, and poetry gatherings. Worship is shared with St. Thomas the Apostle Mission. Outside, the annual thrift shop turns donations into care, offering affordable items to the community and giving freely to those in need. Hospitality here is intentional, welcoming 2S and LGBTQ+ people with courage and care. Even the building reflects this spirit, with cedar-lined walls and clear windows framing the surrounding forest.

Through Mission and Service, Tobermory United Church is connected to a wider movement of faith, creativity, and resilience.

We can keep this welcome strong. When we give to Mission and Service, we help ensure that churches like Tobermory stay open, connected, and full of care for everyone. Give today and be part of sustaining this vital community.

Call to Worship (Responsive)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

By God's great mercy, we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Though we have not seen him, we love him; and even though we do not see him now, we believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.

We come like the disciples, gathered behind closed doors, seeking the peace that only Christ can give.

We come like Thomas, bringing our honest doubts and our deepest questions, ready to encounter the Living God in our midst.

May the breath of the Holy Spirit rest upon us, and may the outcome of our faith be the salvation of our souls.

"My Lord and my God!" Let us worship God together!

Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle

As we light our Christ candle and our World candle ponder together how we best encounter God. Does our faith need 'proof' or evidence, or are we content with trusting the words of the people around us?

Listen to God's words for you this morning from John 20:

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Opening Prayer

Living God, we gather here today in the brilliant light of the resurrection, even as we carry our own shadows of doubt and fear. We thank you for the "living hope" described by the apostle—a hope that does not fade but sustains us through every trial and season of testing.

Grant us the courage of Thomas, who was not afraid to ask for the truth, and the peace of the disciples, who found strength in the presence of the Risen Christ. We confess that like them, we often find ourselves behind closed doors, locked away by anxiety or uncertainty. Breathe your Holy Spirit upon us now, O God. Blow through the barriers we have built around our hearts, and speak your word of "Peace be with you" into our lives.

As we worship, refine our faith like gold in the fire, so that we may love the one we have not seen and trust the one we cannot touch. May the outcome of our journey today be a deeper sense of your salvation and a renewed joy that is both indescribable and glorious. In the name of Christ, our Living Hope, we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn VU 290 (sing x3) "Nothing Can Trouble"

**Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
God alone fills us.**

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Passing of the Peace

Prayer for Reconciliation

Merciful God, you meet us with peace, yet we confess how often we live behind closed doors—guarded by fear, doubt, and uncertainty.

We struggle to trust what we cannot see, and we hesitate to believe the good news of your living hope.

Like Thomas, we demand proof; like the disciples, we hide when courage is needed.

In times of trial, our faith falters, and we lose sight of the joy you promise. Forgive us, O God. Breathe your Spirit upon us once more, and open our hearts to trust your presence, even when we cannot perceive it.

Renew in us a living faith, that we may follow you with courage and hope. Amen.

Assurance of Love

Hear the good news:

By God's great mercy, we are born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christ comes among us, even through locked doors, and speaks peace to our troubled hearts.

Though we have not seen, we are loved; though we falter, we are held in grace.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and restored.

Thanks be to God.

Theme Conversation

Our Scriptures Today

1 Peter 1:3-9

Salvation is the outcome of faithfulness.

John 20:19-31

Jesus appears to the disciples and to Thomas.

Reflection

Hymn

VU 148 (sing x3)

"Jesus, Remember Me"

**Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.**

**Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.**

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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 Prayer

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

Risen Christ, you come among us speaking peace, even when our doors are closed and our hearts are guarded. Trusting in your living hope, we bring our prayers before you.

God of mercy, strengthen your church in every place. Where faith feels fragile, renew courage; where doubt lingers, offer welcome and understanding. Help us to love you even when we cannot see you, and to live with a joy that reflects your grace.

God of life, hear our prayer.

God of peace, breathe your Spirit upon the world. In places of conflict, fear, and division, open what has been shut tight. Guide leaders in wisdom, and inspire communities to seek justice, reconciliation, and the flourishing of all people.

God of life, hear our prayer.

God of compassion, be present with all who suffer. For those facing illness, grief, or uncertainty, and for those whose faith is tested by hardship, grant comfort and strength. Remind them that they are held in a hope that does not fade.

God of life, hear our prayer.

God of presence, meet us in our own questions and doubts. Give us the honesty of Thomas and the openness to recognize you in our midst. Shape us into a community where all are welcome to seek, to question, and to believe.

God of life, hear our prayer.

God of resurrection, lead us to live faithfully day by day, trusting that the outcome of our faith is your saving love. Send us into the world as bearers of your peace.

We offer all these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, who comes to us and says, "Peace be with you."

Today, we have special prayers for:

Joy	Carol	Chris O.	Kim P.
Liam	Rev. Myra	Leah	Sandy
Lorne & family	Jim	Serge	Ellen & Art
in the loss of	Bev	Grace	Those
Joanne	Kim	Lainey	suffering
Shirley	Dianne	James	addictions
Abby	Rae	Bob	
Janet	Fran	Brynnley	

And as a community we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:

Our Father....

Closing Hymn VU 948

“O God, Hear My Prayer”

**O God, hear my prayer. O God, hear my prayer:
when I call answer me.**

**O God, hear my prayer. O God, hear my prayer:
come and listen to me.**

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Living our Faith this Week

How do you manage your own doubts and fears about your faith? Can you be honest with your community about your struggles and allow them to help you?

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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