

Many of the mothers arrived exhausted, carrying grief, uncertainty, and the constant demands of caring for their children in difficult circumstances. At the retreat, they were offered psychological support, time in nature, and creative activities, while their children were cared for through play and art. For many, it was the first time they had been able to focus on their own wellbeing.

One mother shared that she had spent so long focused on her children's needs that she had forgotten her own. In this space, she was able to rest, reflect, and begin to regain strength for the journey ahead.

Through Mission and Service, initiatives like this become possible. Our gifts help create spaces where caregivers can receive care, where resilience can be renewed, and where hope can be strengthened even during ongoing hardship.

On this Mother's Day, we remember the strength of mothers everywhere, and the importance of supporting that strength in return.

Our gifts to Mission and Service help make this care possible, make your gift today.

Call to Worship

Come, people of hope and courage,

people who seek what is good in a complicated world.

We gather not because life is easy, but because love calls us here.

Who will harm us when we set our hearts on what is right?

Even when we suffer, we are not abandoned.

In our questions, in our struggles,

Christ meets us — not above us, but beside us.

So we come to honour Christ in our hearts, to listen with humility, to speak with gentleness, to act with compassion.

We remember the One who suffered for justice,

who stood with the marginalized, who walked through death into new life.

In every flood and storm, God makes a way toward renewal.

So let us worship — with open hearts, with courageous hope,

and with a commitment to the good that transforms the world.

Sung Call to Worship MV 79 (vs 1) "Spirit, Open My Heart"

Refrain **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.

¹ God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender.

All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender.

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Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle

As we light our Christ candle and our World candle take some time to check in with yourself and how you are feeling today.

A moment of silent reflection: What's your overall 'feeling' today? Are you hopeful, or pessimistic? Are you happy or sad? Are you anxious or settled? What would it mean for you to live in a place of God's hope with whatever feeling you have?

Listen to God's words for you this morning from Psalm 66:

*"Bless our God, O peoples;
let the sound of his praise be heard,
who has kept us among the living
and has not let our feet slip."*

Opening Prayer

Holy One, who meets us in deep waters and quiet moments, we thank you for the hope that sustains us in a fragmented world. Sanctify Christ in our hearts today, and teach us the holy rhythm of your grace—a grace that does not shield us from struggle, but empowers us to meet every challenge with courage and compassion.

As we are washed anew in the promise of our baptism, grant us the strength to seek what is good, to speak with gentleness, and to live with such integrity that your love is made visible through us. Guide our steps toward justice and peace as we follow the way of the Risen Christ. Amen.

Opening Hymn VU226 "For the Beauty of the Earth"

**¹ For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies,**

***Refrain* God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**² For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon, and stars of light, *Refrain***

**³ For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild, *Refrain***

**⁴ For each perfect gift sublime to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven, *Refrain***

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Passing of the Peace

Prayer for Reconciliation

Gracious and loving God,
you call us to seek what is good, to speak with gentleness, and to live with integrity—yet we confess that we do not always follow this path.

We allow fear to shape our choices,
we respond to conflict with defensiveness rather than compassion,
and we turn away from opportunities to do justice and embody your love.

When we are called to give an account of the hope within us,
we sometimes fall silent, or speak without grace.

When we are invited to trust in your way,
we cling instead to what feels safe or familiar.

Renew us, O God. Clear our hearts and steady our spirits,
that we may return to the way of Christ—
the way of courage, humility, and love. **Amen.**

Assurance of Love

Hear the good news:

Christ suffered once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous,
not to condemn, but to bring us into the fullness of God's love.

In Christ, we are not defined by our failures,
but renewed by grace, strengthened for what is good,
and called again into lives of hope and courage.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:
in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

Theme Conversation

What are you hoping for today?

Our Scriptures Today

Psalm 66: 8–20

God preserved us.

1 Peter 3:13–22

Do not repay evil for evil.

Jubilate Deo.

A response to Psalm 66 - By Malcolm Guite

In the rich valley of the resurrection

The jubilate deo will resound

A jubilant rejoicing in perfection.

But even here the echo of that sound

Of perfect praise enriches our brief song,

A canticle that's taken up around

*The world. The voices of the weak are strong
In God's enduring praise. He knows their cause,
And he will vindicate the poor, who long*

*To see his justice come and his good laws
Prevail at last. Till then their jubilation
Will shake the powers that be and give them pause*

*To tremble in the midst of exploitation
And glimpse in others all the joy they've missed,
Till love himself comes as a revelation.*

Reflection

Hymn

MV 12

"Come Touch Our Hearts"

- ¹ Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,
from failing embers build a blazing fire;
love strong enough to overturn injustice,
to seek a world more gracious, come touch and bless our hearts.**
- ² Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,
your quiet presence all our fears dispel;
create a space for spirit to grow in us,
let life and beauty fill us, come touch and bless our souls.**
- ³ Come touch our minds and teach us how to reason,
set free our thoughts to wonder and to dream;
help us to open doors of understanding,
to welcome truth and wisdom, come touch and bless our minds.**
- ⁴ Come touch us in the moments we are fragile,
and in our weakness your great strength reveal;
that we may rise to follow and to serve,
steady now our nerve, come touch and bless our wills.**
- ⁵ Come touch us now, this people who are gathered,
to break the bread and share the cup of peace;
that we may love you with our heart, our soul,
our mind, our strength, our all, come touch us with your grace.**

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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

Holy God,
you call us to seek what is good and to live with courage and gentleness.
Trusting in your presence with us, we bring before you the needs of the
world, the church, and our own lives.

For your church in every place—
that we may embody the hope we proclaim,
speaking with humility, acting with compassion,
and standing with those who are pushed to the margins.
God of grace, hear our prayer.

For the world you love—
for places marked by violence, injustice, and fear;
for all who suffer for doing what is right;
for leaders and communities, that they may choose the path of peace.
God of justice, hear our prayer.

For those in need—
for the sick, the grieving, the lonely, and the weary;
for those facing uncertainty or hardship;
for all who long for healing, dignity, and hope.
God of mercy, hear our prayer.

For this community—
that we may be shaped by your Spirit
into a people who reflect your love in word and action;
that we may listen deeply, welcome fully, and serve faithfully.
God of love, hear our prayer.

For ourselves—
for the quiet struggles we carry,
and for the hopes we hold close to our hearts.
In a moment of silence, we offer these prayers to you. (*Silence*)

God who meets us in every storm and leads us toward new life,
receive these prayers and continue to form us in the way of Christ,
in whose name we pray.

Today, we have special prayers for:

Joy	Fran	Brynnley	Robin
Liam	Chris O.	Kim P.	Grace
Shirley	Leah	Ellen Jane	Haley
Janet	Serge	Jennifer	
Carol	Lainey	Sandy	
Kim H.	James	Ellen & Art	

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

Our Father....

Closing Hymn

MV 176

"Three Things I Promise"

- ¹ Three things I promise, Holy God,
in age and youth, in life and death:
to bless your Name, and cling to Christ,
and listen for the Spirit's breath.**
- ² Your love unfolded time and space,
and life, and all that life became,
and so, with thankful heart and voice,
through good and ill, I bless your Name.**
- ³ I follow, serve, and cling to Christ
amid our culture's tides and trends,
for here your Name is most revealed:
Majestic Love, and Best of Friends.**
- ⁴ Enlivened as the Spirit moves
to cleanse, awaken, and renew,
I pray that justice, peace, and truth,
may seed and grow in all I do.**
- ⁵ If I should live when vigour fades,
and family and friends are gone,
three acts of loving faith remain
when days are slow, and work is done.**
- ⁶ Revive and guide me, Living God,
as day by day, until my death,
I bless your Name, and cling to Christ,
and listen for the Spirit's breath.**

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Living our Faith this Week

This week take some time to look at the world with God's hope.

Commissioning and Benediction

Go in peace, and may the peace of God, which shines brightly and vanquishes our darkness, always be with you. Go, knowing that God is your rock and your refuge. You are not alone. God is always with you. AMEN.

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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Bethel United Church Women

Bethel United Church
1500 Rideau Ferry Rd.
Rideau Ferry



Afternoon Tea

Saturday, May 23 2026

2 sittings 11:30am & 1:00pm

Tickets \$30. (*limited number*)

call Kathleen @ 613 200 1568

