

Bethel United Church

July 5 2026

- All **Bolded Text** indicates a congregational response

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Bethel United Church in Rideau Ferry Ontario. Today is July 26 and Sixth Sunday after Pentecost. My name is Rev. Lynne Gardiner and I am pleased to welcome all of you into this place of worship, whether you are worshipping with us virtually, or in person in our Sanctuary.



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

Rev. Lynne's contact information is: Phone (613) 267-3855 or email pastor@bethelchurchrideauferry.ca

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 at 10am on Thursday.

A second Grief and Bereavement Drop-In Support Group will take place in the Bethel United Church Hall on Wednesday, July 29th from 1:30-3:30 p.m. If you would like to participate, please register with Brad Dowdall, Community Home Support Lanark County
Call 613 267- 6400 or email bradd@chslc.ca

From Session and the Stewardship Committee

- 2026 Bethel Outdoor Service and BBQ Picnic will take place at 11a.m. on Sunday, July 26, 2026
- Location: Sun shelter at Rideau Ferry Yacht Club Conservation Area
- Special morning of outdoor worship, shared food, warm friendship and a lot of fun!
- Parking passes from the RVCA are \$10.00 each. (Sandra and Ashley Walker will have the passes here at Bethel on the morning of the 26th (and each Sunday prior to July 26th)
- Meet at Bethel at 10:30a.m. on the 26th and carpool from the church to the Conservation Area to reduce the number of parking passes needed.
- Special saxophone music from Hugh Gardiner during the service.
- Please bring a lawn chair if you would find that more comfortable.
- Stewardship will provide the food and other supplies for the BBQ picnic and participants are invited to make a monetary donation into the basket towards costs.

There are few bright spots for children in the refugee camp, and since 1950, JCC has been one of them.

JCC's kindergarten for refugee children aged 3 to 6 is a happy and colourful haven where children can begin their education. The centre's director noticed Mohammad sitting outside, and decided to speak with his father.

He was invited in, and with his father's permission, Mohammad joined the kindergarten program.

A partner organization with a focus on supporting children with disabilities began working alongside him, and teachers and classmates welcomed him wholeheartedly. As time passed, Mohammad began to grow in confidence, joy, and connection.

In this simple act of welcome, we see God's love made visible. We see children being embraced, barriers softened, and growth encouraged.

Today, Mohammad is a happy young boy who learns and plays alongside his peers. He no longer has to watch from the sidelines—he has a place of belonging.

His father's gratitude is consistent and unmistakable.

In places like Sabra/Shatila, even simple things like books, paper, art supplies, and safe spaces are not guaranteed. The JCC kindergarten itself is facing rising costs after relocating, along with inflation and the need for renovations.

Still, this kindergarten in a refugee camp remains a place where all children are seen, included, and given the chance to thrive.

Through Mission and Service, our gifts help make this possible—places where God's love is lived out through communities that open their doors, and a child at the gate becomes a child in the classroom. Let's give generously.

Call to Worship

Jesus says, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.'

Let us come to him today, to learn to walk in his ways;

let us come to him today, to discover more of his truth;

let us come to him today, to be filled with his life.

Let us come together now, to rejoice in him:

the way, the truth and the life.

Sung Call to Worship

MV 85

"Take, O Take Me As I Am"

**Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart and live in me. Repeat**

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Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle

As we light our candles this morning, we look at God's direction for us as individuals and as community.

A moment of silent reflection: When have you made a decision that took you to an unexpected place? Why did you make this decision? Did you like the outcome?

Listen to God's words for you this morning from Matthew 11:

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

Sometimes it feels like no matter what we do, we can't seem to get it right. We're either too much or not enough for the world around us. We confess that we often get caught up in the "shoulds" and the "musts," carrying around heavy burdens that were never ours to bear in the first place.

We thank you for the way you show up in the simple things and for the wisdom you give to those who keep a curious, child-like heart. Today, we want to take you up on your invitation to just rest in your presence and in your direction. Help us let go of the exhaustion of trying to prove ourselves so we can lean into your gentle way of life.

Walk with us in this time of worship, and teach us how to live freely and lightly. Amen.

Opening Hymn

VU 633

"Bless Now, O God, the Journey"

**¹ Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,
the path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,
then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.**

**² Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way,
whose hope burns through the terrors,
whose love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound.
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.**

**3 Divine Eternal Lover, you meet us on the road.
We wait for lands of promise where milk and honey flow.
But waiting not for places, you meet us all around.
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.**

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Passing of the Peace

Prayer for Reconciliation

God who knows our hearts and our souls,

We confess that we spend so much energy trying to meet other people's expectations that we lose sight of your voice. We judge too quickly, complain too easily, and sometimes miss the ways you are already at work because they don't look the way we expected.

We've added to our own burdens and, at times, made life heavier for others instead of lighter. We've held onto worry instead of trust, criticism instead of compassion, and pride instead of humility.

Forgive us. Help us set down what we were never meant to carry. Give us open hearts, gentle spirits, and the courage to follow the way of Jesus—a way of grace, mercy, and love.

In the quiet of this moment, we offer you the things we need to let go of...

(Silent prayer)

Amen.

Assurance of Love

Friends, hear the good news.

Jesus doesn't come to us with impossible demands or words of condemnation. Instead, he says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

In Christ, we are met with grace before judgment, mercy before shame, and love that never lets us go. Our sins are forgiven, our burdens are shared, and we are invited to begin again.

So receive this gift with joy: in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, loved, and set free to live with hope and compassion.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Theme conversation

A Timeline of God's Direction in our Community of Faith

Our Scriptures Today

Genesis 24: 34–38, 42–49, 58–67

Rebekah welcomes Isaac as her husband.

Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30

My yoke is easy; my burden is light.

Reflection

Hymn

VU 635

"All the Way My Saviour Leads Me"

¹ All the way my Saviour leads me; what have I to ask beside?

Can I doubt his tender mercy

who through life has been my guide?

Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in him to dwell,

for I know, whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.

**² All the way my Saviour leads me,
cheers each winding path I tread,**

gives me grace for every trial, feeds me with the living bread.

Though my weary steps may falter, and my soul athirst may be,

gushing from the rock before me, lo, a spring of joy I see!

³ All the way my Saviour leads me; O the fullness of his love!

Perfect rest to me is promised in my Father's house above.

When my spirit, clothed, immortal,

wings its flight to realms of day,

this my song through endless ages, 'Jesus led me all the way!'

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Invitation to the Offering

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

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Loving God,

You invite all who are weary to come to you, and so we bring before you the prayers of your people.

We pray for all who are carrying heavy burdens today—for those who are anxious, grieving, lonely, or overwhelmed.

Be near to those who are exhausted by illness, by caregiving, by financial stress, by uncertainty, or by struggles that no one else can see. Help them find rest, hope, and companions for the journey.

We pray for your church. Keep us from becoming a community that adds to people's burdens. Instead, make us a place where everyone is welcomed, questions are honored, and grace is freely shared. Teach us to reflect the gentleness and compassion of Christ.

We pray for our communities and for our world. Where there is division, bring understanding. Where people are dismissed or judged, bring dignity and belonging. Give wisdom to leaders, courage to those who speak for justice, and perseverance to all who work for peace and the common good.

We remember those who are often overlooked—the poor, the hungry, refugees, those without safe housing, those living with mental illness, and all who feel invisible. Help us not only to pray for them, but to recognize Christ in them and to respond with generosity and love.

We pray for those we love, especially those whose names we carry quietly in our hearts today...

(A time of silent prayer.)

God of grace, thank you for your gentle invitation to come as we are. When life feels heavy, remind us that we do not carry our burdens alone. Help us leave this place ready to share your kindness, your justice, and your hope with the world.

Today we have special prayers for:

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

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

Our Father....

Closing Hymn

VU 625

"I Feel the Winds of God"

**¹ I feel the winds of God today; today my sail I lift,
though heavy oft with drenching spray and torn with many a rift;
if hope but light the water's crest, and Christ my bark will use,
I'll seek the seas at his behest, and brave another cruise.**

**² It is the wind of God that dries my vain regretful tears,
until with braver thoughts shall rise the purer, brighter years;
if cast on shores of selfish ease or pleasure I should be,
O let me feel your freshening breeze, and I'll put back to sea.**

**³ If ever I forget your love and how that love was shown,
lift high the blood-red flag above; it bears your name alone.
Great pilot of my onward way, you will not let me drift.
I feel the winds of God today; today my sail I lift.**

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Living our Faith this Week

What is God's direction for our Community of Faith? How are we discerning this? How are you discerning God's part in this?

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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