



May 9, 2021



## Welcome & Announcements ~ Jan Richardson

*In your homes which have become sanctuaries, have a candle ready to light and/or a picture or pictures of 'your people'—both biological and spiritual - who've gifted this world by sharing their nurturing life-giving love.*

## Candle Lighting & Centering...

In our worship this day may we remember our mothers; celebrate our matriarchs; and open ourselves to the continuing call to make relatives out of strangers as we care for one another and the world itself.

Gathered in the light of Christ, may we let our light shine -- seeking justice, sharing kindness, living humbly - grounded in your God's gracious, abounding, unconditional love.

## Opening Hymn: *Spirit of Life* #381 VU

Words, Music: Carolyn McDade © 1981 Carolyn McDade. Harmonies: © 1992 Unitarian Universalist Association  
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Video version: an unaccompanied virtual choir <https://youtu.be/sdnr4fNuR74>

## Prayer of Thanksgiving: *God with a Mother's Heart*

~ written by Christine Sine, and posted on **Godspace**.

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/04/prayer-god-with-mothers-heart.html>

God with a mother's heart,  
you gather us as your children.  
You comfort and hold us  
in your warm embrace.

When we hurt your arms enfold us.  
When we are afraid your wings protect us.  
When we are hungry you feed us  
with the bread of life.

God with a mother's heart,  
your love surrounds and supports us,  
in good times and in tough,  
in the midst of joy and pain,  
always and everywhere.  
You will never leave nor abandon us.

God eternal and loving one,  
God with a mother's heart,  
we thank you this day,  
for being part of your family.

## Congregational Theme/Story Time

Are you my mother? Am I yours? What are y/our stories about mothers - animal mothers, make-believe moms and real moms. Today we celebrate giving love. Giving birth is one kind of mothering. Giving and receiving love takes all kinds!

## Bible Readings ~

- **Corinthians 13:4-7** ~ *Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, and it is not snobbish; it is never rude or self-seeking; it is not prone to anger, nor does it brood over injuries. Love doesn't rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices in the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure.*
- **Isaiah 49:14-15** ~ *But Zion said, 'God has abandoned me, God has forgotten me.' Does a woman forget her baby at the breast, or fail to cherish the child of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you.*
- **Psalms 139:13-14** ~ *For you formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*
- **Luke 2:19-20 & 50-52** ~ *Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them on her heart. The shepherds went away glorifying and praise God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told. ....But they didn't understand what he told them. Then Jesus went down with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. Mary stored these things in her heart, and Jesus grew in wisdom, in years and in favour with God and people alike.*
- **Ruth 1:11,14, 16-17** ~ (All we know about Ruth's own mother, is that after her husband, Mahlon, died, Ruth didn't go back to her mother/family. Instead, she clung to her mother-in-law.) *But Naomi said to them. "Go back, my daughters. Why do you want to come with me? I have no more sons inside me that you can take as spouses." ... And once more they wept loudly. Then Orpah kissed Naomi and returned to her people. But Ruth stayed by her side. ...Ruth insisted, "Please don't ask me to leave you and turn away from your company. I swear to you: Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I'll die there too, and I will be buried there beside you. I swear - may God be my witness and judge - that not even death will keep us apart."*
- **1 Peter 3:3-5** ~ *Dress modestly, and not for show - without fancy hairstyles, gold jewelry or fine apparel. Your attractiveness should reside inside, in the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and calm disposition, which is precious in the sight of God. We have the example of holy people of ages past who hoped in God and were attractive because of their humility.*

**Hymn ~ God of the Bible #28 MV** Words: Shirley Erena Murray, 1995 Music: Tony E. Alonso, 2001  
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Video option: St. James United Church, Etobicoke, ON. <https://youtu.be/PIABsT5ajol>

## Message/Reflection Time

### Prayers of the Day

We remember Sarai

who was taunted by others in the household  
because of her inability to have children.

**All-encompassing God,  
we pray for those who feel excluded  
when we emphasis one kind of family as normal.**

We remember Esther,  
who was adopted and raised by her cousin.  
**God who embraces us all,  
we pray for those who cannot be raised by their  
parents,  
for a short time or permanently.**

We remember Jochebed, the mother of Moses,  
who placed him into a raft on the river.  
**Saving God,  
we pray for parents who struggle to raise their  
children  
in oppressive circumstances.**

We remember Hannah,  
who loved her child so much she handed him over to  
another to raise.  
**Loving God,  
we pray for parents who have placed their child in  
another family.**

We remember Naomi,  
who grieved the death of her sons.  
**God, who grieves with us,  
we pray for parents who mourn the death of a child.**

We remember Ruth,  
who gave up her family to be family to another.  
**Inclusive God,  
we pray for those who choose to be family  
to those isolated by culture or language or distance.**

We remember Elizabeth,  
who had a child in old age  
and we remember Mary,  
who had a child as a teenager.  
**Ageless God,  
we pray that as a community we accept people of  
varying life stages  
and responsibilities and relationships.**

We remember Rachel,  
crying for her children  
**God of justice and hope,  
we pray for those whose children are killed,  
and look to a time when children can live safely in  
their communities.**

We remember Lois and Eunice,  
who taught Timothy faith by example.  
**Faithful God,  
we pray for those who teach us faith by their lives,  
may we remember that we also teach about you in  
the way we live.**

We remember other people not named in the  
Scriptures,  
like the mother of the prodigal son.  
**Companion God,  
we pray for those who wait for a phone call or a visit,  
cut off from family and friends by distance and  
disagreement.**

Nurturing God, we give thanks for those  
who enrich our lives by their presence  
who teach us about your abundant love  
who encourage us to journey in faith.

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## **The Prayer Jesus Taught**

### **Closing Hymn: *Blest Be the Tie that Binds* #602 VU**

Words: John Fawcett 1782. Music: Attributed to Johann G. Nageli, arranged by Lowell Mason.  
Public Domain. Video Version ~ Peninsula United Church <https://youtu.be/CgLQDP1XLqY>

### **Sending Forth ~ *A Mothering Blessing***

May God who brought us to birth by the Holy Spirit,  
strengthen us for the Christian life.

May God who provides for all our needs  
sustain us day by day.

May God whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care,  
send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God: Creator, Christ and Comforter  
be with us and remain with us always. Amen.

<https://www.bcuc.org/news/2020/5/9/sunday-worship-service-may-10-2020>

