

Thank you for women, and moms, on Mother's Day

A congregational prayer

Ruth Boehm

Introduction

I have two children by adoption. I am so grateful for birth mothers and foster mothers. I remember years of leading parent-child blessing services on Mother's Day and how difficult that was for me before I had children. Even now, Mother's Day is a tough day for children who are adopted. In our congregation we have people who have birth grandchildren, had difficult mothers, or are raising their sister's children. We have a host of strong and courageous women. This prayer is for all such people.

Thank you for women, and moms, on Mother's Day

Nurturing God, Wisdom, Sophia,

We thank you *for women*.

Strong. Creative. Nurturing women.

Who use their brains to calculate numbers and count the stars.

Who use their fingers to play keys and create sounds.

Dynamic. Quiet. Courageous women.

Who see a need, call a meeting, and raise money.

Who help those who require refuge, who are hungry,

or who need a friend.

Teachers. Advocates. Empowering women.

Who reach out to children and notice the needs and potential of younger people.

Who plant gardens and watch birds.

Who sew and cook. Intervene. Love.

Thank you God for strong women.

Thank you *for mothers*.

Gutsy women who open their whole selves to you.
Who open their spirits to let your light shine through.
Who open their bodies to let you knit together precious ones
in their wombs.
Who open their hearts to love.
Thank you for birth mothers, adoptive mothers, foster mothers.

Mothering is complicated, O God.
Sometimes it is the best things ever.
And sometimes it is not.
When heartache and love must be held side by side.
When loss wrenches the fibres of our beings and we are forever changed.

Comfort those whose wombs remain empty.
Console those whose arms are vacant after miscarriage
and early infant loss.
Stand by and keep vigil with those who have been separated
from their children.
Due to many factors, including addiction, mental illness, disease,
or death.
May we honour the pain and joy that these experiences
of mothering brings.

Today, O God, we thank you for *our* mothers.
Real, flesh and blood women,
Embodied in our complicated humanness.
With skills and faults,
Loves and hates,
Frailties and strengths.
Yet created by you in your image.
Wonderfully made.
Help us to honour them or treasure their memory.

Bless *all women*.
Those who worry if they are enough.
Those who wonder who they are called to be.
Those who balance work, friends and family.
All who are invited to remain open to you and your love.
Bless all women with wisdom and joy.
Amen.

About the author

Ruth Boehm is a mother of two amazing children through the process of adoption and is married to Barry Bergen. She has been pastor at Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington, Ontario, for eighteen years. Previously, she volunteered with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Winnipeg with conflict resolution, was pastor for twelve years at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, and spent three years in Nigeria with MCC seconded to Gindiri College of Theology teaching conflict resolution. She is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. During her most recent sabbatical, she worked on a project that brings together images, scriptures, and prayer called *Seeing with the Heart*. It that can be found on Common-Word.ca.

This prayer was inspired by strong women who are the backbone of her family and friends, congregation and neighbours. It was originally published in 2023 at *Together in Worship* (www.togetherinworship.net) under Creative Commons: Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY4.0) and is reprinted here by permission.