

**Devotion, Fifth Week of Eastertide, 2024**  
**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

This week is one of sorrow over the loss of Betty Foster, one of our Matriarchs of the church, but also a time to remember her life with joy and to celebrate her homecoming. I always thought of her as one of my “mamas.” All my life I have been blessed with wise women who nurtured and mentored me, or just gave me hugs and let me know they loved me. Some were aunts, but a number of them were older women in our Presbyterian Women organization who took me under their wings and showed me how to do things. And there always seemed to be one or more of these strong, faithful women in the church who listened to me, told me how to cook things, shared faith stories, or just gave me a hug. They never created the angst that sometimes happens with your own mother – they didn’t have to take sides or remind you of your moral compass – they just embraced and listened and showed their love with their quiet actions.

I hope many of you have been blessed with these “mamas” as well. I believe we all need as many of them as we can gather around us. It’s a hard, often confusing world, and obtaining the wisdom of these older women is truly a Godsend.

I have tried to grow into a role as a “mama” for younger women and men. I focused on that role in my work with PW, and also with my 42-year career with a health care software company. I believe God intends for us to share our gifts with those around us, to help raise a village in the faith, and to love those that God sends our way. So as we remember Betty, I hope we will take with us the testimony of her life – to love unconditionally those around us, to love God with our whole hearts, and to remember that we are part of a beloved community that should support each other as we journey through this crazy world. God bless her and her wonderful memory as she has joined the saints of the faith.

*Jeanne*