

# *Honoring the many ways care, nurture, and love show up in our lives through relationships.*

As we prepare to celebrate Mother's Day, many communities hold the deep meaning of Mother's Day alongside the rich complexity of gender, family, grief, and lived experience. Attending to that fullness is itself a beautiful step toward more expansive and inclusive ministry.

**One helpful shift is moving from “Mother’s Day” as a gendered recognition to “honoring the many ways care, nurture, and love show up in our lives through relationship.” This opens space for people of all genders who mother, as well as those for whom the day is tender.**

At its core, this is about moving from assumption → invitation, and from gender → vocation and relationship. You don't have to lose the warmth or celebration—just widen the circle of who is seen within it.

**Here are a few ideas that congregations have found meaningful:**

## **Broaden the language intentionally In worship, consider naming and celebrating:**

- all who nurture, parent, and care for others
- people of all genders who embody mothering roles
- those who long to be parents
- those who have lost mothers, children, or relationships
- those for whom this day is complicated

This can be done through prayers, a litany, or a short reflection that gently reframes the day.

## **Shift how gifts are given**

Instead of distributing flowers or chocolates based on who is perceived to be female, you might:

- Offer a gift to anyone who would like one (self-selecting)
- Invite people to take one in honor or memory of someone
- Have a station where people can write names/prayers and take a flower as part of that act

This removes assumptions and gives people agency.



### **Create space for multiple emotions**

A brief acknowledgment like:

“Today holds joy, grief, gratitude, and longing. However you come today, you are held in God’s love and in this community.” Even one sentence like this can make a big difference.

### **Offer an alternative or addition**

Some congregations:

- Light candles for those we honor or remember
- Include a moment of quiet reflection
- Provide a small take-home blessing or prayer card instead of gendered gifts

### **Consider a “Blessing of Caregivers” moment**

Invite all who nurture, mentor, parent, or care for others (of any gender) to stand or be acknowledged. This centers the role and calling, not gender identity.

### **Communicate the “why”**

If you make a shift, a short note in the bulletin or a brief pastoral word can help:

“We are expanding how we honor this day so that all people—across gender identities and life experiences—can feel seen and included.”

### **Share the following prayer**

God of love and expansive care,

We give you thanks for all who nurture life —  
for those who mother, mentor, guide, and hold others with tenderness and strength. We celebrate the many ways care is given in this world,  
across all genders, identities, and relationships.

We are grateful for the people in our lives who show up with compassion, who listen deeply, who advocate boldly, and who create spaces where others can grow and belong.

In the spirit of ReconcilingWorks and the Reconciling in Christ program, we give thanks for those who embody a love that is inclusive, affirming, and just — a love that reflects your boundless welcome.

Help us to honor and uplift all forms of nurturing,  
to see the sacred in caregiving of every kind,  
and to continue building a church and world  
where every person is cherished and free to be fully themselves.

With grateful hearts, we pray.  
Amen.

