How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings.
— Matthew 23:37

“Our Mother, our Father who are in heaven.” Truth be told, God is beyond human attempts to name God. Our early, and sometimes lasting images of God and our spirituality are often influenced by how we saw our parents. Today, we’re invited to take our presence, our thoughts, our imaginings to that other image of God’s parenthood, God’s motherhood.

God’s Womb
All humanity, all creation, all universes and more are conceived and borne in God’s womb. We share that sacred space and embrace with all of God’s creation. All of creation has evolved and been loved, embraced, and nourished by God.

Imagine yourself in the warm embrace of God’s love.

God Midwifing Us
When, having been nourished and gifted by God, whether or not we know this of ourselves, we are ready for new domains. We leave secure and known spaces in the hope that new life awaits us. The transition is liminal; it is a crossing over, often accompanied by pain. God as midwife coaches us, encourages us, catches us, and helps us take a deep breath in the new, and perhaps stunning, world. We adjust to new circumstances, and perhaps discover gifts we didn’t know we had. But God as midwife saw our potential and readiness for new life.

Think of a time when you were birthed into a new life. Give praise for that miracle.

God Mothering Our Steps
Picture a young mother as her child takes tentative and wobbly steps, arms outstretched in intuitive balancing. God is always teaching us to walk, to get up, to try again.

Give thanks for those times!

Bridget Meehan in her poem, Who Are You, God? answers, “I am the womb of mystery, birther of new life, the breast of unending delight, … the Mother of Creation, … the feminine face of God.”

“Our Mother who are in heaven …”
CONTEMPLATIVE SITTING:
HELPFUL GUIDELINES

At the heart of contemplation is the awakening to the presence of God in the human heart and in the universe. A community gathered in contemplative sitting is grace flowing for the community, for the church, and for the world.

To begin a contemplative sitting or meditation practice, you may find it helpful to:

• Find a space that calls you into quiet (light a candle or play a chant if it aids stillness).
• Set a specific time for your sitting: 5, 10, 20, or 30 minutes.
• Set an intention for the session, dedicating it to a situation, a person, or a quality needed to grow in our world, such as truth, justice, peace, forgiveness, or courage.
• Become aware of your whole body as you enter into the silence; follow its rising and falling as you breathe in and out. You may wish to say *In* as you breathe in and *Out* as you breathe out, or repeat a mantra, such as “Holy One” – breathing in *Holy* and breathing out *One* – or “Maranatha” (Aramaic for “Come Jesus”).
• Gently note each time your mind begins thinking or feeling or planning – and gently bring attention back to your breath or mantra.
• Give gratitude to yourself for the time you dedicated to contemplative sitting.

It is important to remember that contemplative sitting is not about achieving a particular feeling or experience. It is simply sitting in God's loving presence, coming into present moment, calming the mind by following your breath in and out or repeating your mantra. Contemplative sitting is an encounter with God in the midst of our daily lives.

— Esther Kennedy, OP

Esther conducts a monthly Day of Mindfulness at Weber Center.