



## “Soul Sisters” Women’s Retreat

*by Amelia Boomershine*

Last Spring I told a prophecy from Isaiah during worship at a regional meeting of the United Church of Christ. Jan Lehman was so impressed by experiencing the scripture embodied that she contacted me a couple of months later to inquire about having a biblical storytelling approach to a women’s retreat at her church.

We talked about times and spaces, publicity and program. Jan didn’t really know how the women of Hawker would respond and hadn’t arranged an event like this before. I felt confident that a retreat grounded in biblical storytelling workshop processes would be both enjoyable and meaningful, but you never know for sure how people will receive this different thing that is biblical storytelling.

Jan said there hadn’t been a women’s retreat in her church for a long time. She anticipated a small group of four to six. But she greatly underestimated the interest among women at Hawker UCC to gather for a retreat around a biblical story, in this case, the story of Martha and Mary. When the day came (Sept. 18) twenty-four women arrived, including two teenage girls.

Thanks to the power of engagement with biblical stories and Jan’s diligent attention to detail, the retreat was successful, both in numbers attending and positive response. Asked what was meaningful, replies included:

- Being together
- Meditation on important scriptures
- Different interpretation by group members
- I found the relationship discussions great because I seldom have such discussions
- Learning to take time to be with the Lord
- The story of Martha and Mary
- Taking time to talk and get to know women and sharing
- Hearing the Bible story in so many different ways
- It was really fun and I learned some life lessons

When we passed a talking piece around the circle, and each woman named a word or phrase from the story that especially caught her attention, I was spell bound by the beauty of their voices speaking these words, and the wisdom of their reasons for their choices. I am sure I took away as much from the retreat as anyone. So I second enthusiastic comments such as these: Excellent afternoon!\_We should do it again! Good Job, Jan!