

Melville United Church
Sunday, March 12, 2017
2nd Sunday of Lent

Second

SUNDAY
IN LENT

* *Congregation please stand as you are able.*

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding today: Rev. Marion Loree

Welcome & Announcements

Sharing the Light

Prelude/Centering Time

Call to Worship:

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where will my help come?

Our help comes from God, maker of heaven and earth.

God will help us up when we slip or fall. God will not fall asleep on the job.

Indeed, our Creator never sleeps or rests.

God is our life's breath, as close as our very shadow.

Let us worship our Creator together!

***Hymn:** Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom

MV 10

Opening Prayer:

God of goodness and life,
we gather in the hope and beauty of this day,
to be further opened
along the pathways of faith you set before us.

Holy One, be our journey and our destination.

Question our safe decisions.

Prod our imaginings,

and walk boldly beside us into the unknown,

yet promise-filled, future.

Holy One, be our journey and our destination. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

**God, we come today with gratitude but we also come with doubts
and habits and patterns of living that keep us from living and sharing**

Melville United Church
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Team Ministry

Minister of Worship & Pastoral Care	Rev. Marion Loree
Minister of Faith Formation & Outreach	Jen Auger
Minister of Music:	Matthias Schmidt
Church Secretary:	Gerri McCullough
Custodian:	Robert Mitchell
Chair of Church Council:	Allan Hons
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life to the fullest. We often forget you are with us and we forget to lean on the strength and wisdom that you offer. Forgive us, and open us to trust, to love, to compassion. Amen.

Lenten Candles:

In place of the tradition of "giving something up for Lent" which reinforces the stereotype that darkness equals bad or negative things, this year we will celebrate the light that seems to grow as we observe God's activity in our world. Our candles will symbolize the growing and expanding of the light of newness and hope which originates with God's love.

Candle lighter: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out, not even in the Season of Lent."

Chorus: Catch the Light!

-Bruce Harding

**Catch the light, catch the light:
God's love growing in you and me.
Catch the light, catch the light:
God's love growing in you and me.**

**Catch the light, catch the light:
God's love growing in you and me.
Catch the light, catch the light:
God's love growing in you and me.**

**God's love growing, God's love growing,
God's love growing: feel it growing in you and me!**

**Catch the light, catch the light:
God's love growing in you and me.
Catch the light, catch the light:
God's love growing in you and me.**

Theme Conversation:

***Hymn:** I Can Feel You Near Me God

MV 48

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a (The Inclusive Bible)

(God calls Abram to be a blessing)

YHWH said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people, and the home of your parents, and go to a place I will show you. I will make of you a great people. I will bless you and make your name so great that it will be used in blessings. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. And all the people on the face of the earth will be blessed through you."

Abram, who was 75 years old when he left Haran, began the journey as YHWH had instructed.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 121 (Songs for the Holy One)

(I lift my eyes to the hills)

I lift my eyes to the hills.

From whence comes my help?

**My help comes from the Holy One,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

The Holy One will not allow your foot to stumble;
your Guardian will never sleep.

**No! Israel's Guardian will neither
slumber nor sleep.**

The Holy One is indeed your Guardian,
your shade at your right hand,

**so that the sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

The Holy One will guard you from every evil
and protect your very being.

**The Holy One will guard your going out
and your coming in,
from this time forth, forevermore.**

Reader: Helen Lacroix

Scripture Reading: John 3:1-17 (The Inclusive Bible)

(Nicodemus learns of God's love)

A certain Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, came to Jesus at night. "Rabbi," he said, "we know you're a teacher come from God, for no one can perform the signs and wonders you do, unless by the power of God."

Jesus gave Nicodemus this answer: “Truly I tell you, unless one is born from above, one cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus said, “How can an adult be born a second time: I can’t go back into my mother’s womb to be born again!”

Jesus replied: “Truly I tell you, no one can enter God’s kingdom without being born of water and the Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh; what is born of the spirit is Spirit. So don’t be surprised when I tell you that you must be born from above.

The wind blows where it will. You hear the sound it makes, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

“How can this be possible?” asked Nicodemus.

Jesus replied, “You’re a teacher of Israel, and you still don’t understand these matters? Truly I tell you, we are talking about what we know; we are testifying about what we’ve seen - yet you don’t accept our testimony. If you don’t believe when I tell you about earthly things, how will you believe when I tell you about heavenly things? No one has gone up to heaven except the One who came down from heaven - the Chosen One.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so the Chosen One must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in the Chosen One might have eternal life. Yes, God so loved the world as to send the Only Begotten One, that whoever believes may not die, but have eternal life.

Message: How do we serve God?

***Hymn:** Jesus Christ is Waiting **VU 117**

Offering:

Ministry of Music: J. Schrader - Give Me Jesus

Offering Song: Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands (vs 1) **VU 537**

**Your work, O God, needs many hands
to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve
unless our gifts we share.**

***Offertory Prayer:**

We bring you gifts, O God, knowing that they are but a small portion

of what you have bestowed on us. Yet we know you can take what we offer, and use it in amazing ways to do amazing work. We also know that you can do amazing things through us. Use us that we may be your instruments of peace and love. Amen.

Joys and Concerns:

Prayer Prelude: Be Still and Know **MV 77**

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

Prayers of the People: (beginning with [This Stepping Out](#) - Bruce Sanguin *If Darwin Prayed*)

Prayer of Jesus:

***Hymn:** There’s a Spirit in the Air (vs 1,3,5,7) **VU 582**

***Blessing/Sending Forth:**

Go into the world and let the Spirit of Life,
fill your mouths with words of peace,
your hearts with a longing for justice,
and your lives with acts of love.

We go, knowing God is with us - always. Amen!

***Parting Song:** Sent Out in Jesus’ Name **MV 212**

**Sent out in Jesus’ name, our hands are ready now
to make the world the place in which the kingdom comes.
Sent out in Jesus’ name, our hands are ready now
to make the world the place in which the kingdom comes.**

**The angels cannot change a world of hurt and pain
into a world of love, of justice and of peace.**

The task is ours to do, to set it really free.

O, help us to obey, and carry out your will.

Postlude: J. M. Michel - Prelude on Who Trusts in God

Prayer of the Week:

Loving God, sometimes we are scared to trust. We know we should, and we want to, but our world's obsession with certainty and appearing to be in control can get in the way. Open us, God. Make us vulnerable. Teach us not to be afraid, but to trust in your goodness and grace. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: The Door Youth Centre

Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference: New Hamburg

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers: Mary Lloyd, Karen Smillie,
Ralph Rainford

Counters: Mary Lloyd, Phil Brown