

Melville United Church
Sunday, March 18, 2018
5th Sunday of Lent

* *Congregation please stand as you are able.*

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding today: Rev. Marion Loree

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Sharing the Light:

Lent can be a journey, together and alone.

Lent can be temptation for each and every one.

Lent can be a challenge to see with more than eyes.

Lent can be a pathway, through sunset to sunrise.

We light our candles to remind us Spirit guides us on our Lenten journey.

(Candles are lit)

Call to Worship:

We are called to this place

to worship and rejoice.

We are called to this place

to learn and know.

We are called to this place

to be formed and grow.

We are called to open our hearts, minds and souls,

to be filled with God's wonder and love.

Come, people of God, let us worship together;

***Hymn:** As Comes the Breath of Spring

VU 373

Opening Prayer: *(written by Richard Bott, Gathering, Lent/Easter 2018, page 30. Used with permission.)*

And it begins.

Life is a cycle -

every moment a beginning,



Melville United Church

St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON: 519-843-1781

Team Ministry

Minister of Worship & Pastoral Care	Rev. Marion Loree
Minister of Faith Formation & Outreach	Jen Auger
Minister of Music Team:	Rob White, Suzanne Flewelling
Church Secretary:	Gerri McCullough
Custodian:	Robert Mitchell
Chair of Church Council:	Allan Hons
Pastoral Care	Alison Rainford, Rev. Marion Loree
Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain	Alison Rainford
Secretary's Office hours:	8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. T., T. & F.
E-Mail:	secretary@melvilleunited.com
Web Site:	www.melvilleunited.com
Pastoral Care Numbers	519-826-9385, 519-835-8605 519-843-3841

March 18, 2018

every moment an ending.

Life is a cycle -

ever changing, never static,

Life is a cycle -

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,
it remains just a single grain.”

Life is a cycle -

but in all the change,
from birth to death and beyond,
the one constant is this;

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us. We are not alone.

Thanks be to God!

Let us pray together:

Write your love on our hearts, God of all.

**Place your call into the deepest depths of our souls,
because we are your people, always,
because you are our God, always.**

**Let your Spirit move us,
change us, drop us into the earth,
and then make us grow -
in Jesus' name. Amen.**

Prayer for Inner Healing:

**Ever Present Spirit, we are so easily led astray from your ways. We
come up with excuse after excuse to follow the footsteps of culture
rather than your footsteps. We turn to things like money, status,
and material possessions as gods instead of you, our Source. Create
in us clean hearts, and put a new and right spirit within us. Amen.**

Words of Affirmation:

God promises to write God's ways on our hearts,

so that we may always know God's love.

Let us rejoice in the goodness of God,

we rejoice knowing we are forgiven.

Be at peace for God's love is yours.

Thanks be to God!

Message of Hope:

Scripture: John 12:20-33 *(New Revised Standard Version)*

(Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth)

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, God will honour.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say - ‘Abba, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Abba God, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Psalm Reading: Psalm 51:1-12 *(paraphrase by James Taylor in Everyday Psalms)*

(Spring cleaning for the soul)

Scrub me clean, God.

Rub me down gently;

by your touch, show how much you love me;

flush away my failures;

sponge off the stains of constant compromise;

help me clean up my act.

You don't have to tell me -

I know too well what I have been doing.

I know I have let you down.

I have betrayed your trust in me.

You warned me;

you have every right to be angry.

Don't blame yourself because I blew it;
I was born this way.

How can I help it? I'm only human.

So wash out my mind, and rinse out my heart.

New life starts on the inside, with knowing myself.

Scrub my spirit clean, and swirl my soiled nature down the drain;

let me step out fresh and sparkling.

Mend my fractured spirits.

Turn a blind eye to my faults,

and cherish the scars where I have fallen down.

**A fresh start begins with a pure heart, oh God,
so let me share your spirit.**

I do not want to be cut off from you;

I do not want to live without you,,

Take me back into your good graces.

Help me, God, for I really want to please you.

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31-34 (*Inclusive Bible - The First Egalitarian Edition*)

("I will put my law in their minds and on their hearts")

"Behold, the days are coming, says YHWH, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them up out of the land of Egypt - a covenant they broke, though I was their spouse, says YHWH. But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says YHWH: I will put my Law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

"No longer will they need to teach one another or remind one another to listen to YHWH. All of them, high and low alike, will listen to me, says YHWH, for I will forgive their misdeeds and will remember their sins no more.

Message: God's Promise - Written on Our Hearts

Hymn: Though I May Speak

VU 372

Offering:

Offering Hymn: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

VU 541

***Offertory Prayer:**

You have written your promises on our hearts, Faithful One. As we learn your words of love for us, may we continue to give our whole selves. Bless what we offer today - gifts of our lives and our labour. May we be a blessing to all whom we meet and may these offerings bring hope and love. Amen.

Joys and Concerns:

Prayer Prelude: How Deep the Peace

MV 95

Prayers of the People:

This is the path of life, among the shadows of the world,
finding the moments of hope, amid the rising of the cross.
May our hands cup the grain, our lives bear the faith,
our souls grip the truth, our hearts trust the promise.

May God's steadfast love be our travelling companion.

May we enjoy a lifetime seeking God, who does not hide from us,
but lives with us through all suffering, and bears us into wholeness.

May God's presence always be our travelling companion.

May we move out onto the way and with truth and righteousness,
celebrate our living in God, in every place around and within.

May the cry of heaven always be our travelling companion.

May we live in thanks to God, for the love that endures all things,
hearing the promise of wholeness, in all the world's brokenness.

May provision of grace always be our travelling companion.

May we hear the beating of a new heart, inscribed with God's loving law,

a law of justice and righteousness, a law of love and fairness for all.

May we live in covenant with the presence we call God.

Our prayers continue...

Prayer of Jesus:

***Hymn:** To Show by Touch and Word

VU 427

***Blessing/Sending Forth:**

**We go to listen for God,
speaking in every heartbeat!**

We go to serve God,

whose law is written on our hearts!

We go in the presence of God,
who has declared that only a heartbeat away
is the promise of resurrection.

Thanks be to God. Amen!

***Parting Song:** God, Prepare Me to be a Sanctuary **MV 18**

**God, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy tried and true;
with thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you** (Repeat)

Prayer of the week:

Help us remember that we are born of Spirit and need Spirit's guidance. Open our hearts and minds to hear Spirit speaking to us this day. May we hear your words of hope and promise and live in to the great love that is ours. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: Central Pentecostal Church, Elora

Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference: Mount Pleasant

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers:

Joan and John Cuming,
Linda and Norm Porritt

Counters:

Kaillie Rawn and Art Russell