

Melville United Church
Sunday, March 31, 2019
4th 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

Call to Worship:

Whoever you are, God says to you,

welcome home!

Wherever you have been, God says to you,

welcome home!

Whatever you have done, God says to you,

welcome home!

In the midst of temptation, anxiety, or confusion,

God says to you,

welcome home!

Whether you fell or you think you deserve it or not,

God says to you,

Welcome home!

Come, let us worship our welcoming God together.

***Hymn:** Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love

VU 574

Prayer of Approach and Confession:

God of all, we see you awaiting us,

and in our worship,

we pick up our tired pace;

we long to please you;

we reach for your embracing arms;

we offer our voices and presence;

and we rejoice in being called together in worship.

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	
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
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Your embrace, O God, is our life and our hope.

**Receive us when we drift
into recklessness and despair.**

Receive us when we drift

into self-righteousness and resentment.

**Forgive us and receive us as we give thanks
for the grace that embraces us with love. Amen.**

Words of Affirmation:

People of God, the great good news is that, like a loving parent, God waits for us and will always welcome us home. Feel the embrace of our parent God and breathe deeply into the arms of gentle forgiveness. In God's love you are home.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Ministry of Music: Rise Again

Time with the Younger Ones:

Song: I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

VU 575

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 (*The Inclusive Bible, the First Egalitarian Translation*)
(*In Christ we are a new creation*)

And so from now on, we don't look on anyone in terms of mere human judgment. Even if we did once regard Christ in these terms, that is not how we know Christ now. And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old order has passed away, now everything is new!

All of this is from God, who ransomed us through Christ - and made us ministers of that reconciliation. This means that through Christ, the world was fully reconciled again to God, who didn't hold our transgressions against us, but instead entrusted us with this message of reconciliation. This makes us Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making the appeal directly through us. Therefore we implore you in Christ's name; be reconciled to God.

Words to Inspire: Psalm 32 (*A paraphrase by James Taylor - Everyday Psalms*)

Happy are those who have nothing to hide;

even happier those whose slate has been wiped clean.

I used to lie awake, worrying about things I had done;
and during the day, about things I had not done.

My conscience tormented me. I couldn't concentrate.

I was terrified of being exposed.

So I went to God, and confessed.

I made no excuses for myself; I didn't hide anything.

And God forgave me.

What a relief it is to share a gnawing secret!

Forgiveness is like a cool drink on a hot day,

like a warm fire in a winter blizzard.

God's grace renews my strength;

it gives me a second chance.

God says, "I will teach you how to take charge of your behaviour.

You are not like horses and camels

who need bridles and bits to control them.

You have a mind; you can think.

You can anticipate consequences before you act."

Experience isn't always the best teacher.

Let God lead you through life.

Reader: Allan Hons

Scripture: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 (*The Inclusive Bible, the First Egalitarian Translation*)
(*parable of the prodigal son*)

Meanwhile, the tax collectors and the "sinners" were all gathering around Jesus to listen to his teaching, at which the Pharisees and the religious scholars murmured, "This person welcomes sinners and eats with them!"

Jesus told this parable: "A man had two sons. The younger of them said to their father, 'Give me the share of the estate that is coming to me.' so the father divided up the property between them. Some days later, the younger son gathered up his belongings and went off to a distant land. There he squandered all his money on loose living.

"After everything was spent, a great famine broke out in the land, and the son was in great need. So he went to a landowner, who sent him to a farm to take care of the pigs. The son was so hungry that he could have eaten the husks that were fodder for the pigs, but no one made a move to give him anything. Coming to his senses at last, he said, 'How many hired hands at my father's house have more than enough to eat, while

here I am starving! I'll quit and go back home and say, "I've sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called one of your children. Treat me like one of your hired hands." With that, the younger son set off for home.

"While still a long way off, the father caught sight of the returning child and was deeply moved. The father ran out to meet him, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'I've sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called one of your children.' But his father said to one of the workers, 'Quick! Bring out the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Take the calf we've been fattening and butcher it. Let's eat and celebrate! This son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and now he's found!' And the celebration began.

"Meanwhile the elder son had been out in the field. As he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the workers and asked what was happening. The worker answered, 'Your brother is home, and the fatted calf has been killed because your father has him back safe and sound.'

"The son got angry at this and refused to go in to the party, but his father came out and pleaded with him. The older son replied, 'Look! For years now I've done every single thing you asked me to do. I never disobeyed even one of your orders, yet you never gave me so much as a kid goat to celebrate with my friends. But then this son of yours comes home after going through your money with prostitutes, and you kill the fatted calf for him!'

"'But my child!' the father said. 'You're with me always, and everything I have is yours. But we have to celebrate and rejoice! This brother of yours was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and now he is found.'"

Message: Come and Join the Party!

Hymn: I Am a Child of God

MV 157

Offering:

Ministry of Music: Good Old Gospel Singing

***Offering Hymn:** God of All Good (verse 1) **VU 539** (Tune 378)

**God of all good, our gifts we bring to you,
use them your holy purpose to fulfil;
tokens of love and pledges brought anew
that our whole life is offered to your will.**

***Offertory Prayer:**

**Patient and loving God, you are always ready to welcome us home,
and you are always ready to welcome our gifts so that your work in
this world may continue through us. This is why we give. Receive our
giving and receive our love. Amen.**

Joys and Concerns:

Lenten Spiritual Practice Challenge:

Prayer Prelude: Where Two or Three Are Gathered **MV 14**

**Where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there. I am there.
Where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there. I am there.**

Prayers of the People:

Response at the sound of the chime:

Forgive us and show us the way home.

The Lord's Prayer:

***Hymn:** Great is Thy Faithfulness

VU 288

***Blessing:**

There, God waits. Can you see?

And here, God waits. We look within.

There and everywhere, God stands arms outstretched,
ready to receive us and welcome us home to love.

Go and do God's work with love in your hearts,

we go, knowing God is with us, now and always!

Amen!

Parting Song: May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You

May the good Lord bless and keep you,
Whether near or far away.
May you find that long awaited,
Golden day today.

May your troubles all be small ones,
And your fortune ten times ten.
May the good Lord bless and keep you,
'Til we meet again.

May you walk with sunlight shining,
And a blue bird in every tree.
May there be a silver lining,
Back of every cloud you see.

Fill your dreams with sweet tomorrows,
Never mind what might have been.
May the good Lord bless and keep you,
'Till we meet again.

May you long recall the rainbows,
Then you'll soon forget the rain.
May the warm and tender memories,
Be the ones that will remain.

May your heart be tuned to music,
That will cheer the hearts of men.
May the good Lord bless and keep you,
"till we meet again.
May the good Lord bless and keep you
"till we meet,
"till we meet again, "till we meet again.

Postlude:**Prayer of the Week:**

Your embrace, O God, is our life and our hope. Receive us when we drift off into recklessness and despair. Receive us when we drift off into self-righteousness and resentment. We thank you for the grace that embraces all with love. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: Central Pentecostal Church

Western Ontario Waterways: Parkview: Stratford

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers: Mark Andrews, Doreen and Larry Broome

Counters: Larry Broome and Phil Brown