



*Celebrating
175 Years*



August 9, 2020

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church, Fergus Ontario
Sunday August 9th 2020
10th Sunday after Pentecost

Worship prepared today by
Rev. Ruth Brown

We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality, and culture of the Indigenous peoples with whom Treaty 4, also known as the Haldimand Tract, was signed, and the territory wherein our church resides. We acknowledge our responsibilities to treaty people.

Welcome

My name is Ruth Brown. I am a retired United Church minister living in Fergus. I am grateful to be offering these words of worship and pray they will lead you and all of us together in Spirit; gathering us deeper into the common-union we share in Jesus' name, strengthening us in hope for the day that is at hand, and inspiring us with love to live faithfully and with hope.

As Christians we are now keeping time with the **Season after Pentecost**. Sometimes known as the Season of Ordinary Time. Though nothing feels ordinary about time these days. This Season begins with the great feast of Pentecost, when we celebrate God's gracious gift of the Spirit abundantly blessing the gathered community. The Season after Pentecost focuses on the Spirit at work in Jesus of Nazareth through his life and teachings, and the Spirit at work in the church through the gifts of the Spirit, given for the sake of the world.

May God's Spirit be upon us as we begin.

Sharing the Light *Take a moment to light a candle and centre yourself for this time of worship. As you light the candle offer the following words.*

I light a candle

In the name of the God who creates life
In the name of the Christ presence who loves life
In the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life.

Call to Worship

God the Spirit is faithful and untameable, creatively and redemptively active in the world, speaking our prayers of deepest longing, enfolding our concerns and confessions, transforming us and the world. This God gathers us to worship, so may we hallow our time together.

Prayer

Spirit God you speak our prayers for us with sighs too deep for words, you hold us in your love through all seasons, you comfort us with your very near presence in deepest darkness, so do we call upon you now, in this time of worship, with open hearts and minds, that we may be renewed and encouraged to carry on, doing our part to care for one another and your world. Amen.

Hymn VU# 288 Great is Thy Faithfulness vs 1 and 2

Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator, there is no shadow of turning with thee,
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not, as thou has been thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided—
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness, to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Chorus

The Scripture Texts are printed from the New Revised Standard Version. If you have your own family bible or confirmation bible, whatever version, feel free to read it as well. It can be interesting to consider the different words that are chosen by each translator as they interpret from the ancient Hebrew and Greek texts.

Prayer

May your Spirit of wisdom and love guide the reading and hearing of these words. May they settle deep into my heart and mind, body and soul, your Word of Healing and New Life. Amen

Psalm 85:8-13

- ⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
- ⁹ Surely his salvation is at hand for those who revere him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- ¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
- ¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
- ¹² The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
- ¹³ Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸ Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So, Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

The Word of Love
Thanks be to God!

Reflection For Pete's Sake

Psalm 85:8-13 Matthew 14:22-33

Ever wonder about the origins of some of those familiar sayings we utter without thinking.

Upon stubbing your toe in the middle of the night on your way to the washroom.... oh, for Pete's sake!!!

Or when its nighttime, and you're driving home from work, and you're tired and that driver behind you just won't let up, tail gating, he couldn't get any closer could he.... oh, come on for Pete's sake really!!!
And you pull over to let him go bye.

Or when after 50 years you run into an old classmate, you haven't seen him since you were a child...for Peter's sake Tim how are you?

For Pete's sake is a phrase that expresses frustration, irritation or surprise.

For Pete's sake, is a phrase that has been around for quite awhile.

I googled it this week....just out of curiosity and discovered that it dates back to the early 19th century....perhaps originally spoken of as for God's sake, or for Christ's sake, then turned to Pete to be a little less offensive, not wanting to promote the Lord's name in vain.

A turn on the phrase is for the love of Pete, like for the love of God. Understanding in this form, that sake in the phrase, refers to cause, for the cause of Pete, or for the cause of God, which of course was love for all humanity, Jew and gentile, slave and free, male and female.

Other thoughts relate Pete to Saint Peter, known to us as Simon Peter the disciple whose character is fleshed out through the gospel stories.

Peter was one of the first disciples called by Jesus. A fisherman. And the one upon whom the church would be built.

We also remember Peter as the one who when overcome with fear, denied even knowing Jesus in his hour of greatest need. Denied knowing Jesus not just once, but three times.

And Peter, Peter was the one who fell back into his old fishing ways, abandoning the cause, in despair and hopelessness after Jesus death.

Peter was the impetuous one. Always pushing Jesus for proof of his messiahship, that Jesus was the real deal. Peter was eager. Eager to follow Jesus. Eager to be part of the great heavenly kingdom soon upon Israel. But not always eager to do the work. "Peter," said Jesus, on one occasion, "don't send the crowds away, you find a way to feed them." Peter wanted to be Jesus' righthand man, when Jesus was King of the kingdom. Peter was enthusiastic. Peter leapt before he looked. Spoke before he thought.

In today's gospel story, we see many of these traits converging in this one encounter on the sea of Galilee.

At the end of a long hard day that began with news of John's killing by Herod and ended with feeding the masses, Jesus sent the disciples ahead into their boats, while he went up the mountain by himself, to pray. When nighttime came the winds started to pick up, and soon the waters of Galilee were rough, and though the disciples were well seasoned fisherman, rough waters always had a way of raising the anxiety level in the boat.

But it was not until early morning, that he approached them, and of course they were terrified for they did not know it was him. "It's a ghost!" they cried out, to which Jesus responded right away saying, "take heart! It's just me. Don't be afraid."

Peter, needing proof, responded, "Jesus if it's really you, command me to come to you on the water. "

"Ok Peter," says Jesus, " come to me on the water."

So, with great eagerness Peter gets out of the boat and starts walking on the water...oh wow!!! He makes his way right toward Jesus.... until the wind picks up again....and oh dear.... what's happening.... Peter...down he goes, into the deep, arms flailing. Everyone knows fishermen choose not to learn how to swim. "Jesus save me!!!"

Immediately Jesus reaches out to Peter with his hand, and catches him, saving him, saying, "you of little faith, why do you doubt?"

Well of course this scenario happens again and again in the disciple's life. And most intensely after Jesus' death. When Peter's in the boat again with his mates, and a voice from the shoreline calls out to them, to lift them from despair, of catching empty nets after a long night of fishing, "Put your nets in on the other side of the boat," and the nets are so full they cannot haul them into the boat. At which point Peter recognizes the stranger on the beach and leaps out of the boat and runs to Jesus resurrected. And Peter is given the second chance of a lifetime, Jesus undoing or forgiving however you want to see it, Peter's profound guilt about his own fear and denial. Jesus asks Peter three times in this Easter morning encounter, "do you love me Peter," to which Peter responds, "yes Lord you know I love you." And Peter is saved again as he receives the commission to feed and tend and care for the lost sheep everywhere.

While at times the gospel writers depict Peter as a fool and failure, at other times they elevate him to a kind of noble status and model disciple. For me this has to do with Peter's willingness to keep faith. He falters, he competes, he gets angry, he withholds forgiveness, he falls, he doubts, he fears, he pushes too much, he betrays, he despairs, he loves, he dreams, he ventures out on the road less travelled. Peter's humanity is the fullness of our humanity, with a great honesty it's all unravelled and stitched back together by the power of the Spirit at work in him and by his willingness to keep faith come what may.

Peter would serve the cause of love, the kingdom of God come on earth, his whole life. He would bravely go to the gentiles and extend to them the peace of Christ. Peter would be the rock through which the water of life could flow, and he would die for the cause for which Jesus died and lived again.

For Pete's sake to me has become a depth of phrase that brings a smile to my face. Like a brother, a dear friend, so perfectly imperfect, one of little faith, yet what that little faith can do. For Pete's sake has become to me an everlasting prayer, that we would have such faith, even that the size of a mustard seed, that we would keep at it, in the cause of love, by the power of the Spirit at work in us. Amen.

Gift of Music

Preparation for Prayer *As we prepare our hearts and minds to enter a time of prayer, I invite you to sit comfortable and quietly for a moment. Breathe deeply a few times paying attention to your breath as it moves in through your nose and as it fills your lungs. Picture your breath as a light entering your body and filling it with love and relaxation. Then when you exhale through your mouth imagine the breath taking all your tensions and worries with it as it leaves your body. Do this a few times until you feel relaxed, then move into the prayer time.*

Prayers

Holy One with gentle hands receive our prayers of thanksgiving, joy, and concern, remembering all your good gifts surrounding us and all those who have need of any kind this day.

Holy One with patient eyes search out our spirits for we often struggle alone in the dark, we wander off the path, though you hold high the Christ light for us, in the face of sin and want and sorrow, help us remember we do not walk alone.

Holy One with quiet words, offer us peace, when we are overwhelmed by the windy chaos that is part of life, and we lose sight of your faithfulness.

With your infinite heart, Holy One, receive all our living, one day at a time, ever restoring and transforming our lives, forever remembering Jesus we pray,

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Offering

If you would like to do your part by making a monetary donation to Melville United Church, there are several ways to do that.

1. Cheque (post-dated cheques are welcome): made payable to Melville United Church-which can be mailed to the church at P.O. Box 41, Fergus ON N1M 2W7 or put in the mail slot beside the parking lot door.
2. Donate online through the Canada Helps website
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/melville-united-church>
3. Call or email Lynda, to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance payments (PAR).
4. E-transfer directly from your bank. E-mail to secretary@melvilleunited.com

Thanks to all of you who continue to contribute so much to make Melville the caring community of faith that it is. May you be blessed

Hymn VU#288 Great is thy Faithfulness vs 3

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide, strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—wondrous the portion thy blessings provide.

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed thy hand hath provided

Great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

Blessing

We end our hallowed time of worship together,

Assured of God's faithful and spirited presence among us and within

The one who restores salvation in our hearts and brings peace to all people

The one who is the hope of all nations and the destiny of every journey

The one who is order beneath the chaos, truth in existence, and beauty in every act

God blessing us this day and always, through the grace of Christ Jesus, and the power of the Spirit.

Amen.

Prayer of the Week (*adapted from Keri K. Wehlander, Joy is our Banquet*)

Spirit of Life, as the new week unfolds: May we yield to your love, resting in your spaciousness, mending from our frenzy, turning to still waters.

May we trust your quiet rhythm to calm us back to centre, to soften brittle places, to bring new joy in living.

May we receive your gifts with gratitude, honouring time as friend, listening for your heartbeat, bringing peace into our own. Amen.