



February 14, 2021

Melville United Church
300 St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON N1M 1N9
Mailing address: PO Box 41, Fergus, ON N1M2W7
519-843-1781

Team Ministry

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Minister of Worship, Pastoral Care & Outreach | Rev. Marion Loree |
| Faith Formation & Youth | Martha Duncan |
| Ministry of Music Team | Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber |
| Office Administrator | Lynda Rivet |
| Custodian | Robert Mitchell |
| Chair of Church Council | Allan Hons |
| Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain | Alison Rainford, Rev. Marion Loree |
| Office hours | 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. T., Th. & F. |
| E-Mail | secretary@melvilleunited.com |
| Web Site | www.melvilleunited.com |
| Pastoral Care Numbers | 519-835-8605, 519-843-3841 |

Melville United Church
February 14, 2021
Transfiguration Sunday

Presiding today - Rev. Marion Loree

Welcome

My name is Marion Loree and I am the minister here at Melville United Church in Fergus, Ontario. We gather in community today - February 14, 2021. Because our province is in a lock-down situation with Covid-19 restrictions there are no worshippers here with me. On-line services will be our norm for the foreseeable future and those who don't have electronic access are offered a printed version.

And here we are - the middle of February already! It will be spring before we know it! And Spring is a hopeful time, especially so this year as we wait for restrictions to be lifted and look forward to getting outside more and being together in more 'normal' ways. In the meantime we gather with hope in our hearts.

Today is also Valentine's Day - a day set aside to focus on love. And we know, of course, that God is love - pure love and nothing but love so I invite you to join me in this time of worship to think about and remember we are loved beyond our wildest imaginings.

Today we will also be treated to a presentation by the children and youth of our congregation who have prepared a video for us to enjoy.

Acknowledgement

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, and we acknowledge our responsibilities as treaty members.

Sharing the Light: *(If you are watching this on-line or reading it from a page I invite you to take a moment to light a candle, centre yourself and prepare to enter in to a time of worship and prayer. As you light your candle repeat the following words)*

We light a candle today to remind us
that there is a mysterious power or presence that connects us all -
we call it God.
that this mysterious presence dwells within each of us -
as it did in the person of Jesus whom we call the Christ.
that we *cannot* be separated from this presence that is
the Spirit of love which created us and that is part of us always.

Call to Worship:

We come together expecting God to meet us,
We come together to be reminded of God's presence.
We come together remembering that God is with us and within us always.
So come, let us worship and remember God together.

Hymn: Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love (sung)

- 1 Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
 tender and true, tender and true,
 out of the heart of the Father above,
 streaming to me and to you:
 wonderful love, wonderful love
 dwells in the heart of the Father above.

- 2 Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell
 joyfully came, joyfully came,
 came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
 sharing their sorrow and shame,
 seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
 saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

- 3 Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
 why do they roam? why do they roam?
 Love only waits to forgive and forget;
 home, weary wanderers, home!
 Wonderful love, wonderful love
 dwells in the heart of the Father above.

- 4 Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!
 Come and abide, come and abide,
 lifting my life till it rises above
 envy and falsehood and pride:
 seeking to be, seeking to be
 lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Words of Wisdom:: by Rainer Maria Rilke

For one human being to love another,
 that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks,
 the ultimate, the last test and proof.
 The work for which all other work is but preparation.

Opening Prayer:

O Spirit of love beyond all imagining,
 visit each of us today with your peace.
 On this day on which we celebrate love,
 We want to know we are loved
 and we want to know how to love.

Open our hearts to your amazing love.
 Open our hearts to love ourselves and each other
 as we worship together. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Dear God, Creator of all, forgive us our stubborn belief in our own power. Open us to trust in your unconditional love to overcome whatever challenges we face. Give us the wisdom to understand your teaching and the trust to find the angels you send to guide us. Give us strength and courage to act with love in every situation. Amen,

Words of Assurance:

Hear and know without doubt - the light of God's love shines in and through you. All you have to do is open to the possibilities that love brings. Thanks be to God.

Ministry of Music: MV 138 - My Love Colours Outside the Lines - solo Rev. Marion

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition*)

(The light of knowledge shines in our hearts)

If our gospel can be called veiled in any sense, it is only for those who are headed toward destruction. Their unbelieving minds have been blinded by the god of the present age, so that they do not see the splendour of the Gospel showing forth the glory of Christ, the image of God. It is not ourselves we preach, but Christ Jesus as Sovereign, and ourselves as your workers for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts, so that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ.

Scripture: Mark 9:2-9 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition*)

(The transfiguration of Jesus)

Six days after that, Jesus took Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone.

And there Jesus was transfigured before their eyes: the clothes Jesus wore became dazzlingly white - whiter than any earthly bleach could make them.

Elijah appeared to them, as did Moses, and the two were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus, "Rabbi," he said, "how wonderful it is for us to be here! Let us make three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah!". Peter did not know what he was saying, so overcome were they all with awe.

Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them; and there came a voice from out of the cloud: "This is my Beloved, my Own, listen to this One." Then suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore - only Jesus.

As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Promised One had risen from the dead.

Message: Sacred Moments and Thin Places

Mark 9:2-9 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

As I mentioned earlier, today is Valentine's Day. A day set aside to honour Saint Valentine who was a 3rd-century Roman priest who ministered to persecuted Christians. His feast day,

which has been observed since 496 CE is February 14th. This day has been associated with a tradition of courtly love but he is also known as the patron saint of beekeeping and epilepsy, as well as the plague, fainting and traveling. And, of course, he is also known as the patron saint of engaged couples and happy marriages.

The symbol most used for this day is a heart. For us the heart represents love and the children of kids church will be talking more about that in a few minutes through a video they have prepared for us.

This Sunday is also known in church circles as Transfiguration Sunday, the day we hear the story of Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain top. So I want to say a few words about that.

The story of Jesus' transfiguration is the story of a mystical encounter with God. The disciples who witnessed it didn't know what to think and Peter was so overcome with awe that he suggested that they should try to hold on to this moment of wonder by 'building a shelter for each'. The writer clarifies that "Peter did not know what he was saying" and that tells us that the writer knew that mystical or close encounters with God cannot be captured or contained.

Sacred or mystical encounters are illusive and leave the one having the experience wondering what actually happened or if perhaps it was just their imagination. But almost all those who say they have experienced a sacred moment will tell you it changed them in sometimes, profound ways. They all say it had an impact on their lives and that, somehow, they understood things differently afterward.

Another word for transfiguration is transformation and if we think of God as love and nothing but pure love, as I believe God is, then the next step in our thinking is that an encounter with God - 'Love' - changes us, it transforms us. We may not have a mountaintop experience as striking as the disciples witnessed but we can and do encounter love every day. And love can transform us and even the worst of situations.

The Ancient Celts believed that Spirit was everywhere and in everything and they found it natural to experience communion with God in their natural surroundings. The Celts appreciated time as a sacred gift and valued the ordinary, daily routines with gratitude and joy. For them, God was very present and every daily activity was an act of worship. They also believed in 'thin places'. These were geographical locations where a person might be more likely to encounter an other-worldly reality in present time.

These two things - sacred encounters and thin places - are moments when that mysterious something that is beyond yet part of us touches us intimately. They are moments when the distinction between heaven and earth are blurred, joined, or become invisible. Of all the reports I have read of such encounters one word stands out, and that word is love. Great Mystery is with us always, even in the ordinary, every day activities of our very physical lives and at the same time is so much more than we can ever imagine or understand. Any encounter with the Holy Presence is an encounter with the love that created us and that is a good thing to remember and celebrate on Valentine's Day and every day.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Presentation by Children: Love

Preparation for Prayer:

As we prepare our hearts and minds to enter into a time of prayer I invite you to sit comfortably and quietly for a moment. Breathe deeply a few times paying particular attention to your breath as it moves in through your nostrils and fills your lungs. Picture your breath as a light entering your body and filling it with love and relaxation. Then when you exhale 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 on into the prayer time.

Prayers: (beginning with The Heart of Eternal Love - by Joyce Rupp)

Heart of Love,
Source of all kindness,
Teacher of the ways of goodness,
you are hidden in the pockets of daily life,
waiting to be discovered.

Heart of Gladness,
Joy that sings in our souls,
the Dancer and the Dance,
you are Music radiating in our
cherished caches of consolation.

Heart of Compassion,
the Healing One weeping
for a world burdened and bent,
you are the heart we bring
to the wounded, worn and weary.

Heart of Comfort,
sheltering Wings of Love,
Refuge for sad and lonely ones,
you embrace all who bear loss,
gathering their tears with care.

Heart of all Hearts,
the First and Best of all Companions,
you are the Gift secreted in our depths,
connecting us with others.

Heart of Understanding,
One who gazes upon the imperfect,
the incomplete, the flawed, the weak,
you never stop extending mercy.

Heart of Freedom,
the Uncontained Spirit bearing truth,
Great Liberator, forever calling to us,
you urge us toward unrestrained trust.

Heart of Generosity,
Abundance of insight and hope,
daily you offer us gifts of growth,
leading to continual transformation.

Heart of Deepest Peace,
Centre of Tranquility,
Resting Place at the core of our being,
you are waiting always for our return
to this sacred home.

Our prayers continue as we pray for our brothers and sisters of St. Luke's UC, Cambridge and for all those who work with a heart full of love in other parts of our country and the world. And we pray for ourselves as we open our own hearts to share with you all the things which we carry deep within - our sorrows, our concerns, our joys and our thanksgivings. Hear us now in a moment of silence and in your love answer.... (silence)...

Heart of our hearts in whom we live and move and have our being keep love at the forefront of our minds every day.

We offer these and all of our prayers in the name of the one who came in love, taught love and lived love, our brother, Jesus the Christ, who also taught us to pray together saying....

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kindom 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 kindom, 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 Lynda, to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance payments (PAR)
4. E-transfer directly from your bank. E-mail to secretary@melvilleunited.com

Offering Prayer:

Holy Presence, it is good for us to be together even if it is only virtually. In the company of others, we find you and the connection we need to thrive. We offer the best of what we have to each other and we offer our time, talent and treasure knowing you will use all of these for the greatest good. Amen.

Hymn: Love Is the Touch**MV 89**

Love is the touch of intangible joy;
love is the force that no fear can destroy;
love is the goodness we gladly applaud:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Love is the lift in a lingering voice;
love is the hope that can make us rejoice;
love is the cure for the frightened and flawed:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Love is the light in the tunnel of pain;
love is the will to be whole once again;
love is the trust of a friend on the road:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Love is the Maker and Spirit and Son;
love is the kingdom their will has begun;
love is the path which the saints all have trod:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Blessing/Sending Forth:

Inspired and transformed on the mountaintop with Jesus,
we now journey with Jesus back into the ordinary and everyday,
knowing that this is where we must share God's love.
Go, knowing that the love of God,
The Peace of Christ and the
Companionship of the Holy Spirit
is with you always. Amen.

Postlude:**Prayer of the Week:**

We hear your voice, transforming God, and hope for new and deeper understandings of the ministries to which you call us. As we inherit the mantle of ministry from those who have preceded us, may we experience a broader understanding of what it means to be disciples of the Christ. Amen.