



*Celebrating
175 Years*



April 18, 2021

Melville United Church
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Melville United Church

April 18, 2021
Third Sunday of Easter

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 - April 18, 2021. We are meeting virtually because of Covid-19 restrictions. There will be no in-person worship services until restrictions have been lifted and we can ensure the safety of all who might attend.

So today is the Third Sunday of the Easter season. This week we will also see the observance of International Earth Day - April 22. So today we, too, are dedicating this service to Mother Earth - our home. The children have prepared a video for your enjoyment so sit back and relax, open your heart and mind to whatever message the Spirit may have for you today.

Announcements:

Acknowledgment:

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 into 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: (written by Brian Day, Gathering Lent/Easter 2021, page 51. Used with permission.)

To the God of Earth,
 we come as creatures of Earth.
To the God of the cosmos,
 we come as beings made of stardust.
To the God of mystery and making,
 we come to connect with the One who is our source and our home.
We come to worship and seek wisdom. May it be so.

Hymn: It's a Song of Praise to the Maker MV 30

It's a song of praise to the Maker,
the thrush sings high in the tree.
It's a song of praise to the Maker,
the Gray whale sings in the sea.

And by the Spirit you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's a call of life to the Giver
when waves and waterfalls roar.
It's a call of life to the Giver
when high tides break on the shore.

And by the Spirit you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's a hymn of love to the Lover;
the bumble-bees hum along.
It's a hymn of love to the Lover;
the summer breeze joins the song,

And by the Spirit you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's the chorus of all creation;
it's sung by all living things.
It's the chorus of all creation;
a song the universe sings,
And by the Spirit you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

Words of Wisdom: by Chief Seattle

Teach your children
what we have taught our children -
that the earth is our mother.

Whatever befalls the earth
befalls the sons and daughters of the earth.
If men spit upon the ground,
they spit upon themselves.

This we know.

The earth does not belong to us;
we belong to the earth.

This we know.

All things are connected
like the blood which unites one family.
All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth
 befalls the sons and daughters of the earth.
 We did not weave the web of life,
 we are merely a strand in it.
 Whatever we do to the web,
 we do to ourselves.

Opening Prayer:

Creator, we come today to honour Mother Earth, our home.
 We come, knowing we have not cared for our home as you would have us do.
 We come, to learn how to be good stewards of your precious creation.
 Open our minds and hearts to you and the wonders of Earth today.
 Amen.

Prayer of Confession

God of all the suffering Earth, forgive us for wasting the world we are given.
 Forgive us for our failure of empathy for our fellow creatures - human and others.
 Forgive us for our unwillingness to listen
 to the voices that speak of the wisdom of the natural world.
 Forgive us for squandering the legacy of coming generations.
 Forgive us for our refusal to honour your body - the Earth.
 Turn us back to the ways of life.
 Create in us hearts that are filled with love of the Earth.
 Give us courage to do the work of our time;
 to align our lives with you and with your wondrous creation
 that we might walk humbly with you. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

God knows our hearts. When we soulfully search within and ask for forgiveness, God hears us. Our faithful and honest attempts to discern what is good will lead us closer to the Source of All that is. Hear and believe.

Thanks be to God.

Ministry of Music: All Thing Bright and Beautiful VU 291

Scripture: Genesis 1: (The Family Story Bible - Ralph Milton)
 (God Makes a World)

Long, long, long ago, before there was anything, before there was a world, before there was light, before there was darkness, there was God.

Just God. All alone.
 So God decided to make the world.
 Then God said, "Let there be light."
 So there was.
 Beautiful light shining everywhere.
 And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be a sky above and water below."

So there was.

Then God said, "Let the water come together in the hollow places, so there can be dry ground."

So there was.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be green plants and tall trees and grass and beautiful flowers. And let them all make seeds so there can be new plants when the old ones die."

So there were.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be a golden sun in the sky in the daytime, and a silver moon at night."

So there was.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be all kinds of shiny fish in the sea and bright coloured birds to fly in the air. And let the fish have baby fish, and the birds have baby birds, so there can always be new birds and fish when the old ones die."

So there were.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be animals on the land. All kinds of animals that run and crawl and gallop."

So there were.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be people in the world, and let the people be made so they are like me."

So God created people. Women and men. And God said to the people, "Let there be new babies born so there will always be new people in my world when the old people die."

Then God said to the people, "Take care of my world. It's yours to use. All of it. But please be kind to my world."

Then God looked at all the world, and all the beautiful things in it.

And God said, "That's very good."

When all was done, God rested.

Message: How to help the Earth - Melville Kids Church

First observed in the United States in 1970, Earth Day is now celebrated worldwide as a time to focus on conservation and preservation of the world's resources. Earth Day celebrations often feature educational programs and community activities such as cleaning up public parks and roadsides, and participation in public recycling efforts. As stewards of God's gifts, we are called to take care of God's creation.

So this week, in honour of Earth Day, Martha and Melville's Kids Church children discuss how Earth Day reminds us that we need to look after our beautiful Earth. God's creation, including land, air, animals and plants, is important. God needs us to be "stewards" of these gifts by reducing our waste, recycling, and reusing everyday items.

We listen to the story, "One Plastic Bag" by Miranda Paul. The story is about Isatou, a young woman living in Gambia who notices that her village is becoming overrun with garbage, including hundreds of plastic bags. Isatou decides to collect plastic bags from the garbage heaps. She washes the bags, cuts them into strips, and crochets the strips into beautiful purses and bags. Isatou, along with other women, sell these bags and begin to transform their village into a more beautiful place.

Melville Kids Church Presentation:

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.

Silent Preparation:

Prayers:

God of the universe, you are the origin of what is and what will be. We give thanks for the wondrous planet Earth, our home, and its placement among galaxies, stars, and planets. We give thanks for its abundance of life: for the plant life draped green and flowered over the globe, for all the creatures that swim through the seas, fly in the air and for the astounding range of animal life found on the land. Open our eyes to the ways you are seen and sensed in the creatures of Earth - even us.

We give thanks for our existence as part of the fabric of this wondrous planet and for the blessings of being inhabitants here. We give thanks for the gifts of water and air, and for the sustaining food that soil and human labour yield, and for Earth's provision of all our needs.

This world is overflowing with beauty and wonder- signs of your presence and generosity and we give thanks.

We pray today for the well-being of our Mother Earth. She has been and is still being assaulted at our hands. We have not cared for her. We have not been good stewards of the gifts your earth provides. And so we pray for the earth and hold in our hearts this planet that holds us.

We pray for all who suffer from a disrupted climate - those who endure famines and floods, droughts and wildfires, hurricanes and heat-waves; those who face hunger, thirst, and disease; those displaced by climate influenced conflicts.

We pray for our sisters, brothers, and siblings all over the earth. We pray for our animal kindred and kin; for each species shrunken, threatened, extinct; for the plants and the animals struggling in our time to adjust to a swiftly changing world.

We pray for reconciliation, people to people and people to land. We pray today for our brothers and sisters of Allenford/Parkhead Pastoral Charge and for all those who work on our behalf in other parts of our country and the world. And we pray for ourselves. Hear the prayers of our hearts...(silence)...

Let our words, our choices, and our actions, be true and faithful to Earth and to you, Creator God.

We offer these and all of our prayers in the name of our brother, Jesus the Christ, who stands among us as we pray together saying...

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 a number of 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:

From the bounty with which we are blest we offer a portion back to you, Holy Presence, to be used to care for all - Earth, creatures, fellow humans and all of Creation. Amen.

Hymn: This is God's Wondrous Words (spoken) **VU 296**

- 1 This is God's wondrous world,
 and to my listening ears
 all nature sings, and round me rings
 the music of the spheres
 This is God's wondrous world
 I rest me in the thought
 of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
 God's hand the wonders wrought.
- 2 This is God's wondrous world:
 the birds their carols raise;
 the morning light, the lily white,
 declare their Maker's praise.
 This is God's wondrous world:
 God shines in all that's fair;
 in the rustling grass or mountain pass,
 God's voice speaks everywhere.

3 This is God's wondrous world:
 O let me ne'er forget
 that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
 God is the ruler yet.
 This is God's wondrous world:
 why should my heart be sad?
 Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:
 God reigns, let earth be glad!

Blessing/Sending Forth:

May we be blessed by air and water,
 by earth and fire, by land and sky.
 May we be a blessing to all that blesses us.
 May we go with the brightness of Earth in our blood,
 attuned to the sacredness of the world where we live.
 May we go as kindred of tree, seal and deer,
 of moss and flower, eagle and orca,
 as kindred of all the living world.
 May we go to love and serve the Love that Created us.
 Amen.

Postlude:

Prayer of the Week: Sioux Prayer
 O our Father the Sky, hear us and make us strong.
 O our Mother the Earth, hear us and give us support.
 O Spirit of the East, send us your Wisdom.
 O Spirit of the South, may we tread your path of life.
 O Spirit of the West, may we always be ready for the long journey.
 O Spirit of the North, purify us with your cleansing winds. Amen.