



*Celebrating
175 Years*



April 25, 2021

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church
April 25, 2021
Good Shepherd 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 - April 25, 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 Fourth Sunday of the Easter season. This week's service is sponsored by the Melville Social Justice Team and the focus today is on mental resources that are available in our area. The number of those seeking treatment for mental health issues during this past year of the Covid-19 pandemic is on the rise and our hope is that the information presented today may be useful to you or perhaps someone you know.

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:

Come this day with hope
because God loves you.
Come this day with peace
because you are accepted.
Come this day with joy,
for all that God has done.
Come, let us worship together.

Hymn: The Lord's My Shepherd MV 747

- 1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me,
the quiet waters by.
- 2 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own name's sake.
- 3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.
- 4 My table thou has furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.
- 5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

Words of Wisdom: Self-Discovery-Wendell Berry, "The Real Work"

It may be that when we no longer know what to do
We have come to our real work.
And that when we no longer know which way to go
We have come to our real journey...

Opening Prayer:

You are the Good Shepherd and we are your sheep.
We come in all shapes and sizes, all colours,
personalities, quirks, and possibilities.
In your generous welcome, you open wide the gates of community
so all can gather in and know your love.
Let us feel you near as we worship together today. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

God, when we feel useless and despairing,
lead us and give us our confidence back.
When we have lost the will to join in
lead us back to the joy and satisfaction of being with others.
When we have no energy to meet life's challenges
lead us to a place of courage and strength.
When we neglect those who are mentally struggling
lead us to compassionate care.
Forgive us and lead us back to faithfulness and prayer.
Amen.

Words of Assurance:

God will never leave you without power or control.
 Take courage - God will give you a fresh start.
 Pardon and peace are yours for the asking!
 Thanks be to God.

Ministry of Music:**Scripture:** 1 John 3:16-24 (The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation)

(Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ died for us. And we, too, ought to lay down our lives for our sisters and brothers. If you have more than enough material possessions and see your neighbours in need yet close your hearts to them, how can the love of God be living in you?

My children, our love must not be simply words or mere talk - it must be true love, which shows itself in action and truth. This, then, is how we'll know we belong to the truth; this is how we'll be confident in God's presence, even if our consciences condemn us. We know that God is greater than our consciences and that God knows everything. And if our consciences do not condemn us, my friends, then we have confidence before God, and we will receive whatever we ask from God's hand - because we keep the commandments and do what is pleasing in God's sight.

The commandments are those that we believe in the name of God's Own, Jesus Christ, and that we love one another as we were told to do. Those who keep these commandments live in God and God lives in them. We know that God lives in us by the Spirit given to us.

Message: Love is a Verb

The command we heard in the reading from 1 John is clear - love one another.

God is love and our call as Christians is to love, to exercise our power in acts of love towards one another. Our multi-layered love for ourselves and others has God's love as its source and its model. Its essence, however, is to be expressed outwardly in action and - love is a verb. The power of God's love emboldens our acts of love in a world full of people who have been disempowered and ill-loved. The question for us is 'How can we, individually and as a community, enact our love in service to those who are in greatest need?'

The Social Justice Team at Melville is concerned about those people. So one Sunday each month we have been presenting information available in our local area about resources that are available. Today the focus is on mental health resources. A video has been prepared that offers valuable information that you or someone you know may appreciate.

Video: Mental Health Services in Centre Wellington

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: Beginning with 'Shepherd' - Bruce Sanguin, If Darwin Prayed, pg 133

Tender God,

we yield to your gentle guidance.

Like a shepherd, you provide all that we need:

you know when we should lie down and rest,

and when we should rise up and be on the move.

Help us to trust the rhythms of the spirit;

lead us away from compulsive action

and the false peace of apathy.

You restore our souls.

We gaze into still waters

and see ourselves clearly now:

reflections of your image

looking back with love.

You lead on the paths that are right for us

and for this planet.

We trust your guidance.

Even in the darkest valleys and most treacherous passes,

the ground beneath us is firm,

and our confidence is great

that you are with us.

You, Great Shepherd,

the ground of our being,

do not desert us.

Our cup overflows with gratitude.

May our lives be filled with compassion and goodness:

this is all you ask in return.

Our prayers continue as we acknowledge that there are many among us today who are walking through the deepest of valleys because of the pandemic. We pray for those who are physically or mentally ill, for those who are feeling lonely, isolated and afraid in these uncertain times. May all know that they are cherished members of your flock - your beloved children - and that you are there for them to lean on and draw strength from.

We pray today for our brothers and sisters of Thornbury/Grace 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 as we offer, in a moment of silence, the prayers of our hearts... (silence)... Loving Shepherd, caring companion, seek us out when we are lost, open our eyes and hearts to the needs of those around us and guide us with your gentle love.

We offer these and all of our prayers in the name of the one who commanded us to love one another, Jesus the Christ, who 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 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 web-site*
<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:

In recognition of all we are given let us commit to doing love - sharing, caring, sacrificing, being patient, generous, selfless, risking judgement or loss or disappointment. Let us offer all the love we have in all the ways we can. Let us do love, let us be love, and let these give bring love. Amen.

Hymn: In Loving Partnership We Come**VU 603**

- 1 In loving partnership we come,
seeking, O God, your will to do.
Our prayers and actions now receive;
we freely offer them to you.
- 2 We are the hands and feet of Christ,
serving by grace each other's need.
We dare to risk and sacrifice
with truthful word and faithful deed.
- 3 Loving community we seek;
your hope and strength within us move.
The poor and rich, the strong and weak
are brought together in your love.
- 4 In loving partnership, O God,
help us your future to proclaim.
Justice and peace be our desire,
we humbly pray in Jesus' name.

Blessing/Sending Forth:

You have heard it proclaimed: God is love.
Go now, knowing that the one who is love profoundly loves you.
Take this love and share it.
Gift it to the hurt and sick, the lonely and troubled.
Be bold, be humble, be love. Amen.

Postlude:**Prayer of the Week:**

God of Love, we turn ourselves this day to the Good shepherd as our inspiration and model for the kind of love for one another to which we are called. Fill us with the power of your Spirit and embolden us in our acts of love each day. Amen.