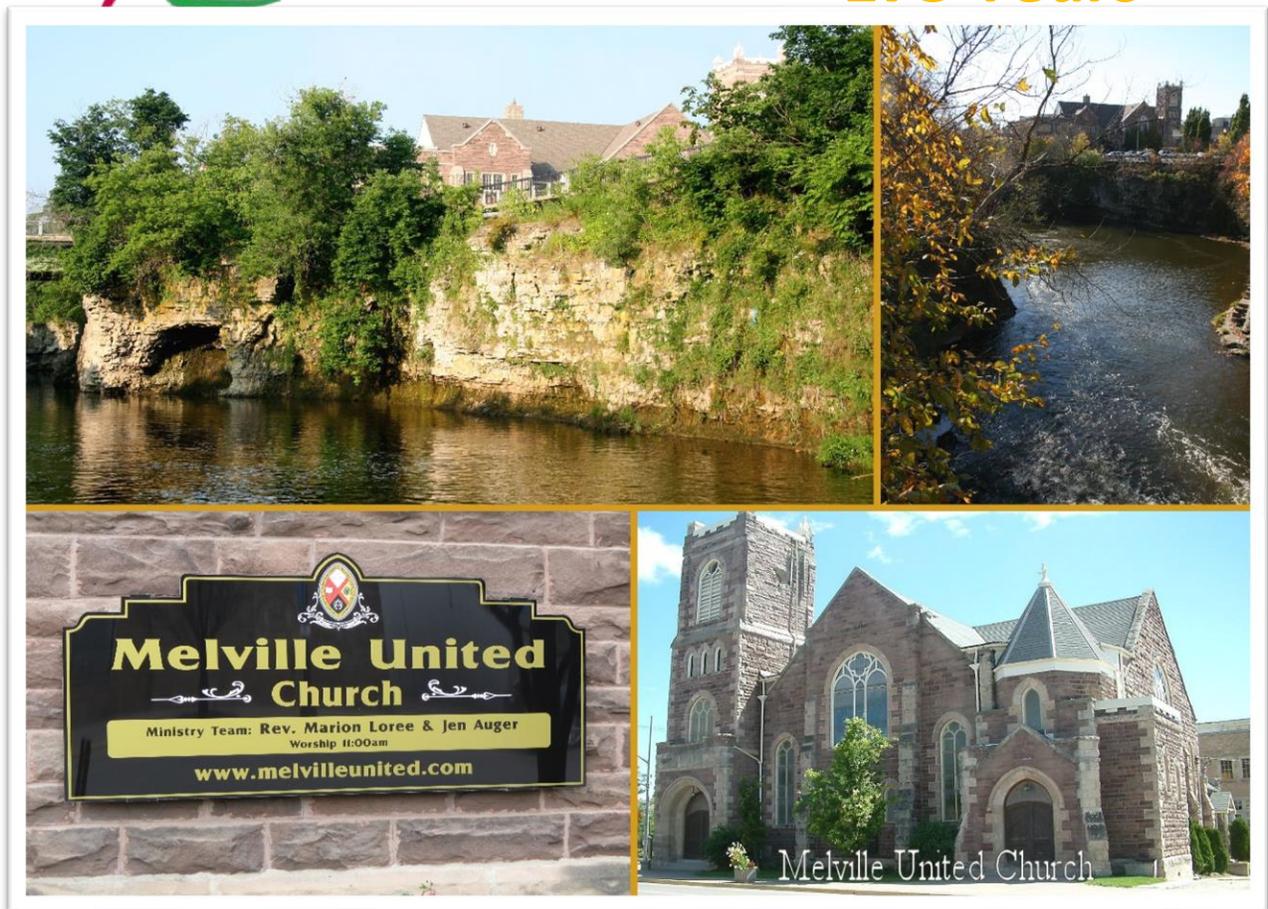




**Celebrating
175 Years**



June 27, 2021

Melville United Church

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Faith Formation & Youth

Ministry of Music Team

Office Administrator

Custodian

Chair of Church Council

Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

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E-Mail

Web Site

Pastoral Care Numbers

Ruth Cooke

Martha Duncan

Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber

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Melville United Church
June 27, 2021
5th Sunday after Pentecost

Presiding today - Rev. Marion Loree

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.

Welcome

My name is Marion Loree and I am the minister here at Melville United Church in Fergus, Ontario. We gather in community today - June 27, 2021 - virtually because Covid-19 restrictions have not opened up sufficiently to allow for being together safely.

Today marks my last weekly service at Melville after almost 7 ½ years of ministry here. I have chosen this time to retire from active ministry and it is with mixed feelings that I prepare to leave this wonderful community of faith known as Melville United Church.

Because this is my last service I thought it a good idea to share with you some of my personal favourites - favourite scriptures, favourite music and a favourite reading.

So I invite you to open your mind and heart as you watch and listen and let Spirit speak to you as it will.

Announcements:

Summer services will continue on-line. The Worship & Music Committee has arranged for some very competent individuals to provide leadership so you need not miss any services at all. The hope is that by September a new, permanent minister might be in place.

Acknowledgment:

Our church resides on the traditional territories of the Attawandaron, Wyandot, Mississauga, and Haudenosaunee First Nations. These are treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit ("Between the Lakes Treaty"). They are also part of the crown grant to the Six Nations ("Haldemand grant"). Grateful for their stewardship of this land, we humbly seek to live together in pursuit of justice and right relations.

Call to Worship:

We come with all our hopes and longings.
We come to find rest for our souls.
We come with all our disappointments and dreams.
We come to gain strength for our lives.
We come to worship together.

Hymn: Make a Joyful Noise (Psalm 100) VU 820

Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song!

1 Know that your God has made you.
Know it's to God we belong.
And come to this place with joyfulness and praise.
Worship your God with a song! R

2 Enter these gates, thanks giving.
Enter these courts with praise.
Sing thanks to your God and bless the holy Name.
Worship your God with a song! R

3 Ages through endless ages,
seasons of endless years,
the love of our Maker ever shall endure.
Worship your God with a song! R

Opening Prayer:

God of all our longings, you are the fire
that kindles our hearts with hope and possibility.
You fill us with desire for life,
and you hear our voices
whether we shout for joy or cry out with sorrow.
We trust in you and give thanks
for your presence in all the stages of our lives.
Help us to be open to the movement of Spirit in and around us.

You know us better than we know ourselves, Great Mystery.
You know our hurts and fears and discouragements.
Forgive us when our actions and non-actions cause harm. Heal us when we give up
hope and allow fear
and shallow self-interest to dominate our lives.
Help us when we lose sight of who we are
and forgive us when we make enemies
of those you have given us to love. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Listen! You are a blessed child of the Universe.
You are loved more than you can ever know.
Take it to heart! Believe it and let your Spirit dance!
We giving thanks to Holy Presence - the source of all that is.

Ministry of Music: The Eyes and Hands of Christ -Tom Kendzia

Intro to Readings:

Rather than one longer message today I will share some of my favourite scripture readings and offer a few thoughts on each as to why it appeals to me.

Scripture: Psalm 139:1-14 (New Revised Standard Version)

O God, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down.
And are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O God, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night."
Even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
your knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

Reflection: Intimacy

I love this Psalm because it reminds me that I am never alone. It reminds me that there is a Creator, a loving presence from which I *cannot* be separated. It speaks to me of a Presence that is with me through whatever may befall, a Presence that is intimately involved in every aspect of my living. It is an intimacy that can be matched by nothing I may experience outwardly in this earthly life.

I have often said “there is no place you can be where God is not”. And that makes sense if you think of God as part of you. For me God is the life-force of all that is without which we would not, could not be. Without universal energy or presence there is no universe and if there is no universe there is no earth and if there is no earth there is no life here and if there is no life here there is no us. It is as simple as that.

Whether we know it or not, acknowledge it or not, or even think about it at all, there is no relationship as intimate as the one we have with the Divine Presence. It is as intimate as breathing - and as necessary for life. We cannot be without it.

So that is why this Psalm is one of my favourites. And we are going to sing one of my favourite hymns now. One of the reasons I like this one is because it speaks of the intimate nature and presence of God.

Hymn: In the Quiet Curve of Evening VU 278

- 1 In the quiet curve of evening,
 in the sinking of the days,
 in the silky void of darkness, you are there.
 In the lapses of my breathing,
 in the space between my ways,
 in the crater carved by sadness, you are there.
 You are there, you are there, you are there.

- 2 In the rests between the phrases,
 in the cracks between the stars,
 in the gaps between the meaning, you are there.
 In the melting down of endings,
 in the cooling of the sun,
 in the solstice of the winter, you are there.
 You are there, you are there, you are there.

- 3 In the mystery of my hungers,
 in the silence of my rooms,
 in the cloud of my unknowing, you are there.
 In the empty cave of grieving,
 in the desert of my dreams,
 in the tunnel of my sorrow, you are there.
 You are there, you are there, you are there.

Scripture: Micah 6:6-8 (the Inclusive Bible The First Egalitarian Edition)

(God's requirements)

"What shall I bring when I come before YHWH, and bow down before God on high?" you ask. Am I to come before God with burnt offerings? With year-old calves? Will God be placated by thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil? Should I offer my firstborn for my wrongdoings - the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

Listen here, mortal: God has already made abundantly clear what "good" is, and what is required of you: simply to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Reflection: Requirements

I like to keep things simple and this scripture sums up very simply what is required to live a 'good' life.

Do justice - treat people fairly, speak out for those who can't speak for themselves, voice your opposition to unfair practices, do not seek to dominate others in any way but, rather, seek to walk with people on their journey to discovering who they are as God's beloved. Remember, even to use the word 'help' implies that you think you know better than someone else what it is they need. Listening should come first when seeking to do justice.

Love kindness - care about people - both people you know and people you don't know. Treat the stranger with the same respect and consideration you would treat a friend. And that includes strangers who look different, who worship differently, who speak a different language, who act differently as well as those whom you might judge to be unworthy. In other words, be kind to every single person you meet - as Jesus did - because everyone has a story and underneath all externals, we share a common human story - the need to be loved and accepted for who we truly are.

Walk humbly with your God - Knowing God starts with gratitude and awe. It starts with the realization that we really know nothing, that we really control nothing, and that there is a mysterious Presence or Power that undergirds all of the universe and that it flows through us.

There aren't many things that are more effective at producing feelings of awe than to go out on a clear night and contemplate the stars. The universe is vast. So vast we cannot begin to comprehend its size or its wonders. The fact that we are here at all is awe inspiring, not to mention the thought that our puny little life here on this planet really does matter is truly humbling.

So do the work. Take that humble journey inward to meet the real you, the God-spark that connects you to all that is. Find the place in you where Spirit dwells because it is there - within you - within everyone - no exceptions.

So that is why these simple words from the prophet Micah are one of my favourite scripture verses.

Scripture: Romans 8:37-39 (New Revised Standard Version)

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God.

Reflection: We are not alone.

In my Bible the words "in Christ Jesus our Lord" are part of this reading. But I left them out because I want to be sure that everyone understands that the love of God is with us with or without Jesus. Yes, God's love was experienced through him but it is certainly not exclusive to him. The love of God has no boundaries, no requirements, no restrictions and it certainly does not belong to any one person or any one group of people.

The love of God is part of us - every one of us. We are born from it and will return to it. As I state at every single funeral or memorial I conduct "we *cannot* be separated from it". Paul knew it, the prophets knew it, Jesus knew it, Mohamed knew it, Buddha knew it. All the great mystics of every tradition knew it. We are all one as part of the great I AM Presence that has many names but cannot be contained by any of them. Our human language is simply not adequate to express it. Our human minds cannot fully comprehend it. But our human hearts can feel it if we open ourselves and let it flow through us.

We live in God's world. In life, in death and in life beyond death we are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: In the Garden

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
and the voice I hear falling on my hear,
the Son of God discloses.

Refrain:

And he walks with me and he talks with me,
and he tells me I am his own;
and the joy we share as we tarry there,
none other has ever known.

He speaks and the sound of his voice,
is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
and the melody that he gave to me
within my heart is ringing.

Refrain:

I'd stay in the garden with him
though the night around me is falling,
but he bids me go; through the voice of woe,
his voice to me is calling.

Refrain:

Words from Allan Hons: - Chair of Council

On parting:

I would be remiss if I were to not include some parting words today. I started my ministry here at Melville in February of 2014 so I have been here almost 7 ½ years. It has been a wonderful experience all the way around. We have seen a few changes during that time. One of them being a change in music leadership and another being a change in youth and Kid's Church leadership. But through it all Melville people kept looking and moving forward.

I have experienced Melville folks as faithful, caring, supportive, hard working, involved, fun, dedicated, accepting, collaborative talented in many ways and so much more. This past year of Covid has been a challenge but many came forward to do what was necessary to get us on-line and to stay connected. Many thanks to the phoning team. Procedures were also implemented to keep people safe when we were allowed to open for a few weeks in the fall. The Church Council has worked hard to, not only keep in touch with people, but to work faithfully toward the future by exploring different ways to be church in this community.

So as I leave you to ride off into the sunset, as they say, to enjoy some down time, I feel confident that Melville is in good hands and is on the verge of becoming so much more than declining membership numbers would indicate. Don't fear the future. Embrace it and go forth boldly letting Spirit lead you.

Thank you all so very much for allowing me to minister with and among you. It has been a pleasure. Now I want to leave you with another of my favourite readings. It sums up much of what I have said, not only today, but over all my years in ministry and offers wonderful advice to live by. Some of you will be familiar with it. It is called Desiderata. That word, by the way, means "things wanted or needed".

Words of Wisdom: Desiderata By Max Ehrmann © 1927

GO PLACIDLY amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all

aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive God to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Prayers of the People:

God of all our longings, you are the fire that kindles our hearts with hope and possibility. You fill us with desire for life, and you hear our voices whether we shout for joy or cry out with sorrow. We trust in you and give thanks for your presence in all the stages of our life.

We pray today for healing in the many places in the world it is needed - places of war and upheaval, places of natural disaster, places of disease and famine, places of environmental degradation, places of oppression and domination, all places where your love has been forgotten or scorned.

We pray today for indigenous peoples everywhere as they struggle to re-assert their rite to live according to their own beliefs without discrimination. We pray today for those of different sexual orientations that they may find acceptance and freedom from harassment. We pray for all people of colour who live with racial profiling and prejudice that they may find equality.

We pray today for our brothers and sisters of Holland Centre Pastoral Charge and for all those who work on our behalf to bring your love to other parts of our country and the world. And we pray for ourselves as we open our hearts and minds to share our concerns, our joys and our thanksgivings. Hear our individual prayers...(silence)... We pray for this community of faith called Melville United Church as they seek to do your work here in Centre Wellington. May they be a beacon of your light to all around.

We offer these and all of our prayers in the name of our brother, 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 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 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:

Loving God, accept all of the gifts we bring - money, time, talent. May they be a symbol of our desire and commitment to play our part in your unfolding story of love. Amen.

Hymn: God be With You Till We Meet Again VU 422

- 1 God be with you till we meet again;
loving counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.
- 2 God be with you till we meet again;
unseen wings protecting hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

- 3 God be with you till we meet again;
when life's perils thick confound you,
put unfailing arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.
- 4 God be with you till we meet again;
keep love's banner floating o'er you,
smite death's threatening wave before you;
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

Blessing: May the Good Lord Bless & Keep You -organ & piano

Sending Forth:

Let us go from here to serve the world God loves
with hearts full of tenderness and joy
and minds full of eagerness and hope.
And may the blessing of God who both goes with us
and meets us on the way,
surround each one of you, this day and always. Amen.

Postlude: I Wish You Love Trenet/Beach

Good bye. No use leading with our chins.
This is where our story ends; never lovers, ever friends.
Good bye. Let our hearts call it a day,
but before you walk away. I sincerely want to say:

I wish you bluebirds in the spring, to give your heart a song to sing,
and then a kiss, but more than this, I wish you love.
And in July, a lemonade, to cool you in some leafy glade.
I wish you health and more than wealth, I wish you love.

My breaking heart and I agree that you and I could never be,
so with my best, my very best, I set you free.

I wish you shelter from the storm, a cozy fire to keep you warm,
but most of all when snowflakes fall, I wish you love.

Prayer of the Week:

Out of the depths we cry to you, O God. And into the depths you accompany us. You hear,
even before we find words. You grieve, even as we feel the pain. You love long before we give
voice to trust. So we wait and hope in your presence. Amen.