



Celebrating
176 Years



October 24, 2021

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church
October 24, 2021
Melville United Church 176th Anniversary

Presiding today - Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Welcome

Happy Anniversary Melville!

We gather in community today – October 24, 2021 virtually and in person. We will continue to offer both in-person and on-line services with printed copies being distributed to those without internet access who are unable to attend in person.

As we gather today, we mark the 176th Anniversary of the Melville United Church congregation and the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost.

Announcements

- The Centre Wellington Ministerial Association has become aware of incidents of violence at Centre Wellington District High School against students who are LGBTQ and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. The recent violence is mostly happening off school property on the paths leading between the high school and Zehrs and between the high school and Sportsplex. Teachers are not able to monitor these locations because they are not on school property. A request has been made to have area churches to recruit 4-5 adults for each lunch hour to walk the stretch of land near the high school and to simply be a physical presence onsite where these attacks tend to take place. If you would be available for a lunch hour or two per week, from 11:30 to 12:30, please let me know.
- The history panels prepared for the 175th Anniversary, and the first of which was shared at that 175th service, are available for individual visits in the church library. Thanks to Graeme Chalmers for setting up the display.
- We continue to collect items for the food bank. A list of the most needed items was sent out, and if you need a printed copy, just let someone on the Social Justice team or me know, and we will get it to you. In addition to non-perishable food items, the food bank is also looking for personal and feminine hygiene products as well as fresh vegetables, apples and oranges.
- The hymn books have been returned to the sanctuary. You will find them on the table on the sides. Please feel free to help yourself. Please return them to the tables at the end of the service.

I invite you to join us now for a time of worship and contemplation.

Acknowledgement *Peter Chynoweth, **Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021**, p.25. Used with permission.*

Land is sacred and holy.

Our relationship to the land is sacred and holy.

Our relationship with each other on this land is sacred and holy.

It calls for respect and appreciation.

And so we offer our appreciation, our thanksgiving, and our respect
that we can gather in this place and on this land

as a result of the welcome that comes through the Haldimand Treaty and the Simcoe Patent -
Treaty No. 4,

which allow for peaceful and respectful living on this land.

Thanks to the
Petun,
Haudenosaunee,
Anishinabewaki,
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation,
Odawa and
Mississauga people

who have lived on and walked these lands for thousands of years.

We acknowledge that we are connected with the people who have lived here for all these years because of the treaties.

Because we are treaty people, we must honour the responsibilities that come with it.

May we be people who remember this with gratitude and respect.

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)*

There once was someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things

teaching

healing

helping

loving

inviting everyone to join in

that people wondered who he was.

Finally they just couldn't help it. They had to ask him who he was.

When they asked him who he was, he said, "I am the light of the world."

So we light this candle to remember and remind ourselves that the Light of the World, and the love, healing and welcome offered are with us here in this time

Call to Worship: *Richard Bott, **Gathering: Pentecost 1** p.79. Used with permission.*

Choices in our past.

God was there.

Choices in our present.

God is here.

Choices in our future.

God will be there.

In our choices—for good or for ill

God is present.

Asked or unasked—

God is here.

And so we gather, knowing that...

God is with us.

God is with "them."

God is with all.

And we worship, saying,

Alleluia.

Alleluia, amen.

Hymn: Let Us Build a House**MV 1**

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children
tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and vision,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions;
 All are welcome, all are welcome,
 all are welcome in this place.
2. Let us build a house where prophets speak
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children
dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
 All are welcome, all are welcome,
 all are welcome in this place.
3. Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat;
a banquet hall on holy ground,
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
 All are welcome, all are welcome,
 all are welcome in this place.
4. Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
 All are welcome, all are welcome,
 all are welcome in this place.
5. Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
 All are welcome, all are welcome,
 all are welcome in this place.

Opening Prayer: *Wendy MacLean, Gathering: Pentecost 1, 2015, p. 79-80. Used with permission.*

Bless, O God all your saints,
those who call your name,
those who sing your praise,
those who preach your work,
those who pray in silence.

Bless, O God, all your saints.

**Before us, behind us, beside us,
knowing the Christ within,
the Christ above,
the Christ who rises from the earth.**

Bless, O God, all your saints,
those who hewed rock and carved wood,
masons and carpenters who built the church
with your Christ as the cornerstone.

**Before us, behind us, beside us,
knowing the Christ within,
the Christ above,
the Christ who rises from the earth.**

Bless, O God, all your saints,
the keepers of your church,
those who sew and cook and sell;
those who build with widow's mite
and housekeeping coins;
wise ones of talent, supporting mission
through study and support and love for their Saviour.

**Before us, behind us, beside us,
knowing the Christ within,
the Christ above,
the Christ who rises from the earth.**

Bless, O God, all our saints,
our children, wiggling, learners
poking and joking in the pews.
They will learn of you through us,
staying and straying in the pews,
dreaming and keeping house
in the home you make for us.

**Before us, behind us, beside us,
knowing the Christ within,
the Christ above,
the Christ who rises from the earth.**

Bless, O God, all your saints,
saints remembered, saints hoped for,
saints uprooted, saints settled,
saints living and dying
in you, with you,
for you, through you.

Amen.

Ministry of Music: “Family of Faith” by Valerie MacKenzie – Melville Choir accompanied by Colleen Weber

Call to Reconciliation *The United Church Publishing House, **Celebrate God’s Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada.** Copyright 2000. Used with permission.*

We are people of worth and value.
When we honestly acknowledge the shame
and guilt of our lives,
God’s mercy and grace are there,
ready to be received when we are ready to accept.

Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation — *Adapted from a prayer by Catherine Tovell, **Gathering: Pentecost 1, 2015**, p. 81. Used with permission.*

Merciful God, we confess that on occasions such as this,
the 176th anniversary of our congregation,
of the church in this place,
it is so much easier to look back
rather than to look forward.
Fearful of what you are calling us to do and be in this time,
we look back and say “It was easier then!”
We appreciate the work of our forefathers and foremothers in the faith,
but assume it was more satisfying in their time.
We forget the cost, the sacrifice, the hard work,
that brought this congregation to where it is today.
We forget painful mistakes
made by our congregation in the name of helping others,
which still require vision, healing and reconciliation.
Forgive us, God,
and help us to look forward and to work forward
knowing that the same Spirit
that enabled past generations
enables us. Amen.

Words of Assurance *Adapted from a prayer by Catherine Tovell, **Gathering: Pentecost 1, 2015**, p. 81. Used with permission.*

We forget important lessons.
God forgets our sins and shortcomings.
**Let us live a more Godly existence,
accepting forgiveness and grace
and offering them to others,
as we envision what our congregation
still has to offer in this community and in this world. Amen.**

“...In the Midst”

Look at a few items from Melville's history panels

In 1844 Rev. George Smellie, pastor of St. Andrew's Church in Fergus attended a meeting in Kingston where the question of remaining with the Church of Scotland because of its requirement that preachers have the support of a local wealthy landowner in order to secure a calling and be ordained.

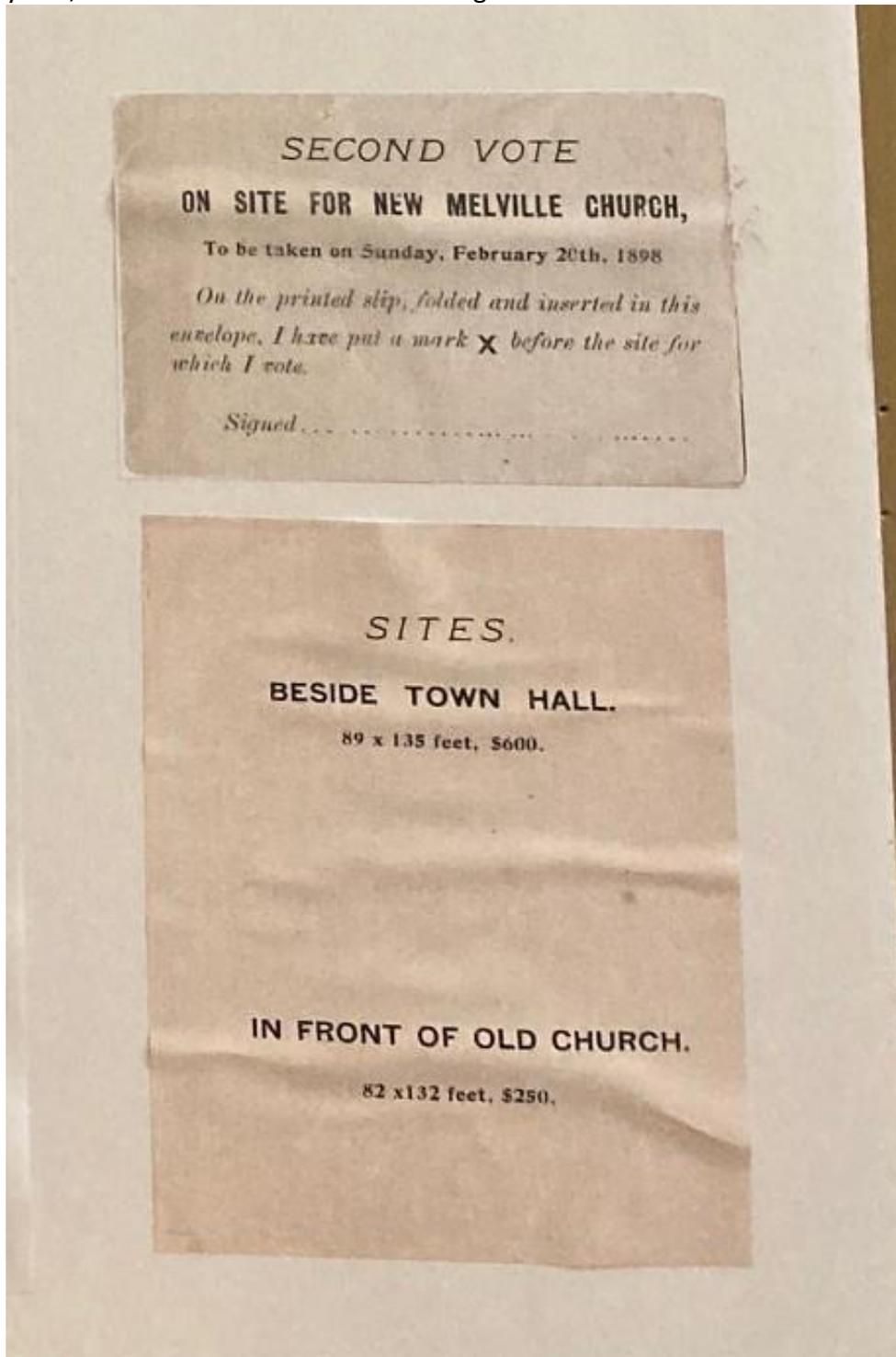
Rev. Smellie was among 23 ministers who decided to break away.



In 1845 a majority of the members of St. Andrew's decided to form a new congregation, Melville, which was named for Andrew Melville, a Scottish theologian, scholar and reformer of the late 1500s and early 1600s who believed that government and wealthy landowners should have no control over the church, especially not the appointment of ministers.

And so in March of 1847, the Melville Free Presbyterian Church, built at a cost of \$6,000 was opened and dedicated. In the first 50 years of Melville's existence, women's mission groups formed, the Willing Workers' Mission Band formed, and an organ was first used in worship.

But after 50 years, the church needed a new building.



And so in 1898 the congregation voted between two building sites:

- Beside the town hall on St. Andrew's Street at the corner of Tower Street, cost of the land \$600
- In front of the old church at Tower and Union Streets, cost of the land \$250

We know how that vote turned out. The New Melville Church opened on May 13th, 1900, with A Social Gathering "held in the Church on Monday Evening, May 14th. Admission 25 cents. Tea served in the Dining Hall at 5:00. Chair to be taken in the Church promptly at 8:00."

There was also A Young People's Social, "held in the School Room on Tuesday Evening. Admission 10 cents. Proceeds to purchase new books for the Sunday School Library. Tea at 5:00. Programme of music and recitations at 8:00."

In 1906 *The Historical Atlas of the County of Wellington* stated: "The membership of the [Melville] congregation, for the most part, has been composed of Scottish emigrants and their descendants, noted for their strength of conviction, robustness of character and fidelity in carrying difficult enterprises well through."

In 1910 the first pipe organ was installed and dedicated.

On June 10th 1925, Melville and Fergus Wesley Methodist Church enter the United Church of Canada. And 1926 saw the union of Melville and Wesley Methodist Church. The name Melville United Church is retained.

In the summer of 1930, the cornerstone was laid for Melville Hall by Mrs. G. Beatty and in the spring of 1931, the hall was opened and dedicated. Later that fall, the chimes were dedicated.



The junior choir on Easter Sunday 1939—58 members strong



The Melville Players around 1940



The CGIT Annual Candlelighting Service, December 1942—over 80 members



In May 1946, a dinner was held for returning WWII personnel—44 people



1959 Melville sends Beatty washing machines to mission areas in Africa

In the 1950s to the 1970s, a recipe book was published, the first woman was elected to the Board of Stewards and the first women Elders were appointed. A daycare centre began and there was much repair and renovation of the church building.

There is much more history recorded on the panels that you can find in the library, and there as well are individual photos that recount Melville's more recent history.

Scripture: Mark 10:46-52 (NRSV)

The healing of Bartimaeus

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

They came to Jericho.

As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly,

'Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.'

And they called the blind man, saying to him,

'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.'

So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?'

The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.'

Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.'

Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

May God bless to our understanding these readings from scripture. Amen.

Prayer *The United Church Publishing House, Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada. Copyright 2000. Used with permission.*

In our struggle to hear your Word broken open, O God,

bless even our doubts, our wonderings,

our wanderings, our soul-struggles,

life's deep questions, and deeper mysteries.

Teach us to love our questions

as well as our answers. Amen.

Reflection: The Power of Healing

For a long time I wondered about the difference between curing and healing. And perhaps even before that, I wondered why it is that we pray for someone to be cured of the ailment that is plaguing them, and yet they continue to have the ailment, and perhaps die from it, in the short term or the longer term. Where is God? What is God doing?

In our Gospel reading, Bartimaeus is suffering, not from a life-threatening ailment, at least in the physical sense, but he has become blind in the course of his life. His blindness has meant that he must exist as a beggar at the side of the road.

The belief in that time was that anyone who experienced a disability was being punished for the sins they had committed. Had he been born blind, the sins, it was understood, would have been those of his parents. As he became blind during his life, the sins were then the sins he had committed himself.

So Bartimaeus subsists at the side of the road, begging for his livelihood. He calls out to Jesus as he, in the midst of a large crowd are leaving Jericho, "Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me!" Various people told him to be quiet, perhaps because to them, his disability proved his sinful nature, and his blindness made him ritually unclean, and so, untouchable.

This man, Bartimaeus, has a world of problems: his blindness; his uncleanness; the supposition that he must have sinned greatly to be struck blind, and therefore is beneath contempt, and certainly beyond care or community; his inability to work for his livelihood...the list is long and profound.

In our world, in our time, we do not understand blindness as some form of punishment, but it still presents challenges that the sighted among us do not face. And people suffer from many other ailments and conditions that limit their ability to live fully, experience life, work, and have social standing—think of those who live with addiction, who suffer from mental health concerns, who live in grinding poverty that interferes with opportunities, who are homeless, or whose condition keeps them housebound, who are hungry, the many for whom such conditions make them voiceless in our society, for whom community is but a wish. Again, a few examples in a long list.

But Bartimaeus, for all his disadvantages, has an understanding: that Jesus is not just a leader and teacher, but a healer, not just a powerful figure in society, but the Son of David promised by God, prophesied for centuries. While Peter names Jesus, “Messiah,” he really has no idea what it means. Bartimaeus understands, he knows that this one, is the one who has come for the sick, the poor, the downtrodden, the excluded, who will not be a warrior king, but who will sit among the outcasts bringing healing and life.

So he throws off his cloak. We might think this act is simply a gut reaction, the impetuous act of a man who can't wait for Jesus' ministrations. But it is more than that. It is a sign of his healing. Even before his blindness is attended to, he can leave behind the life, the isolation, the bad name, the hardship he has known, because Jesus has made room for him. He need not depend upon the cloak to act as meagre warmth and comfort, a scanty barrier to all that assails him. Jesus acknowledges him and welcomes him as few others do. Even before his blindness is attended to, he has the promise of a community and worth. Even before his blindness is attended to, his life has become fuller, more complete.

This, to me, is what healing is about. It happens that Jesus can also cure his blindness, but healing is changing his life's circumstances. Healing is inviting him in. Healing is offering him community.

When I look at the panels of Melville's past, I see that sort of community. From the quest for freedom to make decisions for themselves, to the invitation extended to enjoy a social, and a social for youth at the opening of the new church; from the dinner held for returning WWII personnel, to the opening of a daycare centre; the congregation of Melville has been concerned about people's well-being and their welcome—people of all ages, people of all stages, people of all circumstances.

As we mark this 176th anniversary, we also look forward. We can't “cure” most of what ails people. We can pray for God to do so, but perhaps more importantly we can pray for God's healing. We can pray that we be agents of healing. There is much that ails people in this community of faith, in this community of Fergus, in this community of Centre Wellington, in the wider world. Our ancestors have brought healing, and so can we. In our faith and trust in God, this congregation can be the hands and feet of God, can be a centre of healing, with our building, with our property, with our community, with our faith. We can offer what people need to fill them, we can offer wholeness of their being. We can offer ourselves.

For in life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us, we are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Hymn: Spirit, Open My Heart **MV 79**

Spirit, open my heart
to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

1. God replace my stony heart
with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear
to your grace I now surrender.

Spirit, open my heart
to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

2. Write your love upon my heart
as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word, and deed,
may my living bring you glory.

Spirit, open my heart
to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

3. May I weep with those who weep,
share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ,
may we welcome one another.

Spirit, open my heart
to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

Joys and Concerns

Preparation for Prayer

Let us practice the art of Praying with our Eyes Wide Open, that in seeing the world and those within it we are called to tend we may be *opening the eyes of our hearts to all in need around us* (Lamont Koerner '81 MDiv God Pause for Thursday, September 16, 2021 from Luther Seminary):

**Prayers Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word*[®]
Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 2. Copyright 2015. Alt.**

Call: God of mercy,

Response: **hear our prayer.**

With reverence for Earth, with concern for those in need
and for the whole human family,
let us pray to God, saying,
God of mercy, hear our prayer.

We give you thanks, O God, for the riches of this day,
this season, and this century in history.
Show us always how to better know your gifts
and shape them into benefits for the common good.
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Equip the saints in every land and in every church for ministry.
Bring blessings on people of other faiths.
Gather all creation into unity in you
for the sake of your mission in the world.
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant wisdom to all who lead nations and hold public office,
especially our prime minister, premier and members of both parliaments,
and all who run for public office with courage and generosity of spirit.
Give them the humility that speaks the truth in love.
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach your people in every land to learn about, care about,
and pray for the struggles of all humanity and Earth itself.
We pray for those in any want, especially [*nations currently in jeopardy*],
their neighboring countries, all refugees from war,
the wounded, medical staff, mothers and fathers caring for children,
and for all those who participate in violence
or work in diplomatic circles.
Bring peace to every people.
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Feed the hungry, sustain the weary, shelter the homeless,
challenge the complacent, love the brokenhearted, and heal the sick.
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give us our daily bread: what we truly need each day.
Make us satisfied with the essentials of life,
that as we live in gratitude,
your gifts may increase our awareness of the needs of others.
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear the prayers we offer now in silence or aloud. . . .
[*A time of silence is kept.*]
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for our ancestors whose witness and conviction
built up the body of God through the ages,
especially in and through this congregation of Melville United Church.
Sustain us with the bread of life that fed them,
embolden us with the Spirit to do your will for us,
until we join all the saints around your bountiful table
at the end of the ages.
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive our hopes and pleadings,
for great is your faithfulness;
we pray in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Minute for Mission: The Association of Strong Women Alone made all the difference for Maina



Maina Bai's mother died when she was a baby, and Maina never went to school.

When she was just 10 years old, her father married her off to an older man. By 16, she had a child. A few years after the birth of her daughter, her husband died. When she returned to her maternal home, Maina was married off—again.

After a few years of marriage, Maina became a widow again. Single, she faced extraordinary stigma.

Approximately 2.18 million single women like Maina live in the state of Rajasthan, India. Whether they are widowed, divorced, or have never been married, these women are deemed “incomplete” and a disgrace to their families. As a result, many live lives marked by stigma, fear, and violence—simply for not being married.

In 1986, The United Church of Canada partnered with Astha Sansthan, an organization that empowers marginalized individuals to advocate for their needs. In 1999, Astha Sansthan launched the Association of Strong Women Alone (ASWA), which your Mission & Service gifts support. Immediately, 450 single women joined. Today, there are more than 70,000 members.

ASWA's approach is simple: Create a safe space for single women to come together and get the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their lives.

The association has made all the difference for Maina.

She can now read and write and is empowering other women to become literate. Because of her leadership, 35 women have enrolled in adult learning. All of them now have grade eight certificates. What's more, the generational cycle of illiteracy has been broken. Maina's daughter can not only read and write but is also teaching others to do the same.

Your [Mission & Service](#) gifts empower women like Maina to be agents of change within their communities. Thank you for your generosity.

Offering Invitation *Elaine Bidgood Sweet, **Gathering: Pentecost 1 2015**, p.81. Used with permission.*

At birthday parties we often bring gifts and cards. We express our joy and gratitude for the life of the person honoured. On this 176th birthday of our beloved congregation, let us give thanks to God for the forming and sustaining of our Melville United Church as we offer our gifts. Praise be to God from whom all blessings flow.

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. By leaving your offering envelope on the offering plate at the back of the sanctuary.
2. 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.
3. Donate online through the Canada Helps web-site
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/melville-united-church>
4. Call or email Lynda, to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance payments (PAR).
5. 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

Offering Prayer *Jim McKean, **Gathering: Pentecost 1 2015**, p.81. Used with permission.*

Here, O God, is the harvest of seeds, planted so long ago.

Here are the results of the blessings showered on us in the past.

May these gifts given in love

provide love for all God's creatures,

both at home and away. Amen.

Hymn: The Church of Christ in Every Age

VU 601

- 1 The church of Christ in every age,
beset by change but Spirit led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.
- 2 Across the world, across the street
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.
- 3 Then let the servant church arise,
a caring church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.
- 4 For Christ alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.
- 5 We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
to care for all without reserve
and spread Christ's liberating word.

Commissioning/Blessing Gord Waldie, *Worship Offerings: Prayers for an Anniversary Service, October 8, 2008.*
<http://worshipofferings.blogspot.com/2008/10/prayers-for-anniversary-service.html>. Used with permission.

We go back out into the world to love and serve the world around us,

just as we have done for 176 years, so we continue to do so.

We go out held in the loving arms of God who Creates, Redeems, Supports, and Sustains us.

We are not alone! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Change the Light

Watch. I am going to change the light and I invite you to change your light.

I'm not going to put it out, **just** change it.

See how it is only in one place?

Change Light

Can you see it?

Now everywhere you go today, the light will go with you.

Household Prayer: Morning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 2.** Copyright 2015.*

Holy God, when I awaken each day,
I offer my deep gratitude for another span of hours
to spend in your company.
I rejoice that you have placed before me
the gifts and obstacles the day will bring.
Give me wisdom to enter into each encounter with thanksgiving,
for you hold me in your care and give me words,
in Jesus' name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 2.** Copyright 2015.*

Creator of all, I thank you for the time of rest beginning now,
for all that I have seen, tasted, touched, heard, and smelled this day,
and for all the people and creatures whose lives
have come into my experience.
Bless them with sufficient rest and peace,
that together we may all rise in the morning
with new strength, in Jesus' name. Amen.