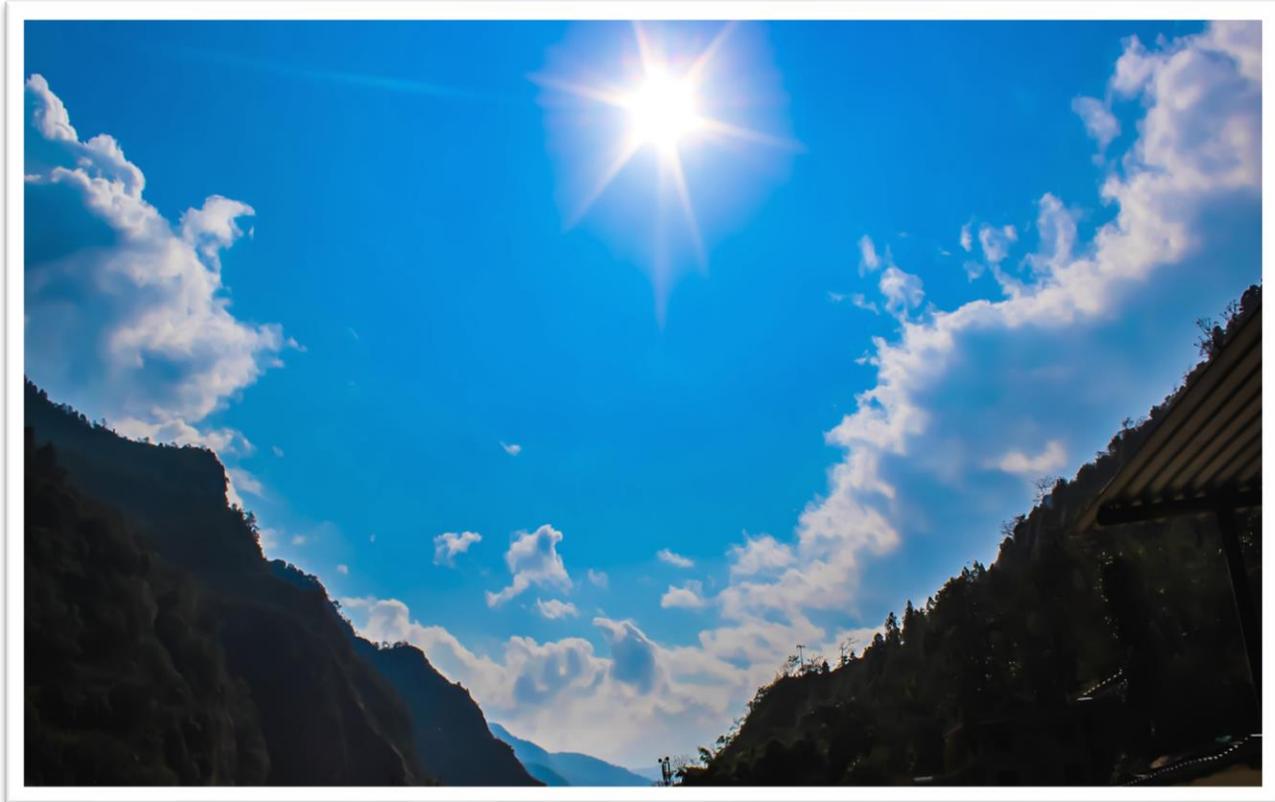




Celebrating
175 Years



September 12, 2021

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church
September 12, 2021
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
First Sunday in Creation Time

Presiding today - Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Welcome

My name is Lynda Goy-Flint and I am delighted to be the newly called minister here at Melville United Church in Fergus, Ontario. We gather in community today – September 12, 2021 virtually and today, in person for the first time in a long time. We will continue to offer both in-person and on-line services with printed copies being distributed to those without internet access.

As we gather today, we mark the Season after Pentecost, and the first Sunday of Creation Time. The Season after Pentecost is the long season of Ordinary Time when the church, baptized with God's Spirit at Pentecost, focuses on our sending into the world that God so loves, in light of the story of Jesus.

Creation Time in the Season of Pentecost is the five, or six Sundays after Labour Day and continue through Thanksgiving Sunday. The root of Creation Time is in the liturgical time known as Ember Days, with various historical understandings, but perhaps best known as "quarter day," a day of asking God's blessing on the new season. It is a season when we consider God's good creation and our relationship to it. The liturgical colour is orange, a warm colour associated with enthusiasm, creativity, fruitfulness, endurance, and strength as well as with sunrise and sunset, fall and harvest, and the changing seasons, nature's last burst of colour before winter. It is the red of passion tempered by the yellow of wisdom.

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 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: 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 that are with us here in this time

Ritual for Re-entering the Sanctuary *Wendy MacLean, Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021, p.63. Used with permission.*

**People are invited to join in the gestures as suits them. For example, you might use your head instead of hands to look down, look around, bow in prayer, and then look up.*

Calling the ancestors (communion of saints): hands open downward, facing the earth

We remember and give thanks for the foundation you built, the church you loved, the community you grew. We carry our faith in this new day.

Reaching out to each other: hands open, circle around (pivot!)

We reach out to each other, greeting each other without words. We are thankful for the blessing of being present, here, in our sanctuary, with each other. We offer blessing, in this new day.

Remembering our friends who are not here: hands over heart

We are grieving the dear ones who are not here. We lament that it is not safe to move freely because of COVID. For all who are missing, but close in spirit, we hold you in love, this day.

Trusting God with the future and our descendants: raise hands in gesture of "Let it be"

We do not know what the future holds, Holy One. We extend our hopes and prayers for the world, out in cyberspace, across the distance, into the community. We bless, in your name. We pray as your people. May we be a sign of your coming, and a sign of hope for the new world, the new day that is born in Christ, each day.

Call to Worship: *Richard Bott. Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021, p.31. Used with permission.*

Wisdom searches. Wisdom seeks.

And we journey with her.

Wisdom wonders. Wisdom wanders.

And we follow her call.

Through the fog

of our confusing lives,

through the bright lights

that distract us from Christ's way,

Wisdom offers us security.

Wisdom offers us clarity.

Wisdom offers us the knowledge of God's ways.

And so we follow her call and heed her ways.

Let us seek Wisdom as we worship today.

Hymn: Come In, Come in and Sit Down **VU 395**

Chorus:

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

You know the reason why you came,
yet no reason can explain;
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,
for we are a part of the family.

 Come in, come in and sit down,
 you are a part of the family.
 We are lost and we are found,
 and we are a part of the family.

God is with us in this place,
like a mother's warm embrace.
We're all forgiven by God's grace,
for we are a part of the family.

 Come in, come in and sit down,
 you are a part of the family.
 We are lost and we are found,
 and we are a part of the family.

There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine;
we are the branches, Christ is the vine.
This is God's temple, it's not yours or mine,
but we are a part of the family.

 Come in, come in and sit down,
 you are a part of the family.
 We are lost and we are found,
 and we are a part of the family.

There's rest for the weary and health for us all;
there's a yoke that is easy, and a burden that's small.
So come in and worship and answer the call,
for we are a part of the family.

 Come in, come in and sit down,
 you are a part of the family.
 We are lost and we are found,
 and we are a part of the family.

Words of Wisdom:

“Humility is throwing oneself away in complete concentration on something or someone else.”

--Madeleine L'Engle, *A Circle of Quiet*

Opening Prayer: *From Psalm 19 – Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 2.** Copyright 2015.*

Look at the heavens!

They are shouting the glory of God.

The days and the nights declare the magnificence of God's creative works.

**Their voice goes through all the earth
and their words reach the ends of the world.**

Let our words of praise be acceptable to you.

Our Lord, our rock, our redeemer! Amen.

Ministry of Music: The Lighthouse *by Ronnie Hinson – Jo Ann Hall accompanied by Suzanne Flewelling*

Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation *adapted from a prayer by Gord Dunbar, **Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021** p.33. Used with permission.*

Let us use our voices to declare those things we have said and done
that have separated us from God, and from each other,
that we may experience God's mercy and receive God's forgiveness.

We speak and sing about the beauty of your good creation, O God.

We speak and sing about those qualities that make relationships flourish.

We thank you for the sublime gift of new life.

Open our hearts to be filled with your Spirit.

Open our lives to follow the Way of Jesus.

**Within our brokenness, open our souls to your healing as we commune with you in silent prayer.
(a time of silent prayer)**

Words of Assurance *Gord Dunbar, **Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021** p.33. Used with permission.*

We are not alone.

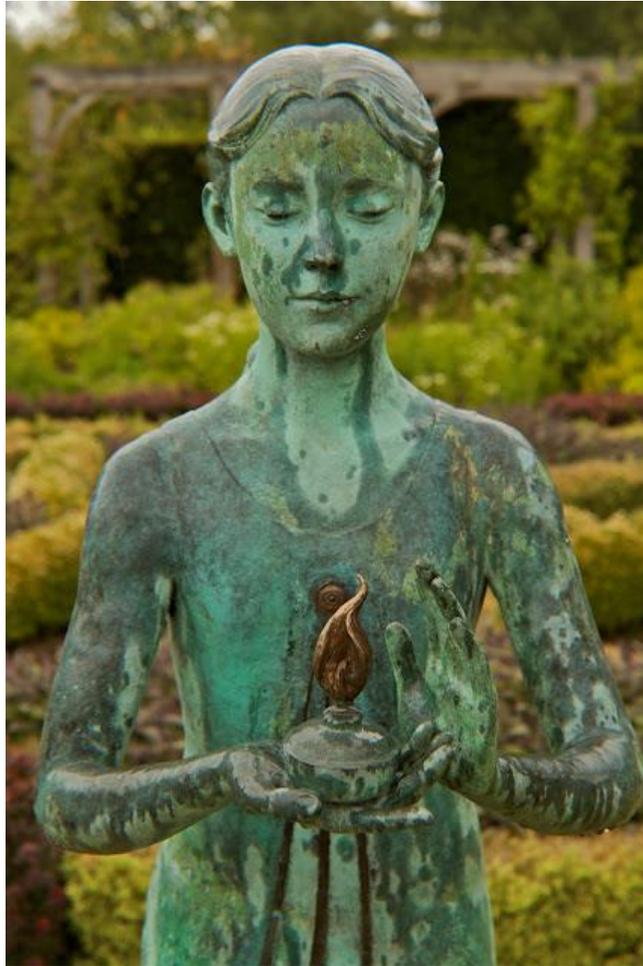
When we feel broken, lost, or alone, the risen Christ lifts us to new possibilities.

When we feel unworthy, inadequate, or worthless, the risen Christ befriends and loves us for who we are and for who we are becoming.

When we feel defeated, oppressed, or ignored, the risen Christ pays attention and embraces us into healing.

We are not alone, for in Christ we are loved into wholeness. Thanks be to God!

“...In the Midst”



Lamp of Wisdom, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54977> [retrieved August 20, 2015]. Original source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/rowanbank/5815103193/>.

Sculpture of Wisdom

This is a person who stands for Wisdom.

I wonder, do you think this person is a man or a woman?

When artists paint or sculpt wisdom, they often depict her as female.

I wonder how old do you think this person is?

People of many ages can be wise.

I wonder what is she holding?

Introduce the flame as light which is a symbol for wisdom.

Refer to such phrases as “Light shines in the darkness” or “get some light on the subject.”

I wonder what she might be doing with the lamp?

Hymn: Open Your Ears, O Faithful People VU 272

- 1 Open your ears, O faithful people,
open your ears and hear God's word.
Open your hearts, O faithful people,
God now speaks to you.
God has spoken to the people, hallelujah!
And those words are words of wisdom,
hallelujah! Hallelujah!

- 2 They who have ears to hear the message,
they who have ears, now let them hear.
They who would learn the way of wisdom,
let them hear God's word.
God has spoken to the people, hallelujah!
And those words are words of wisdom,
hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Scripture:

Prayer *Fern Gibbard, Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021 p.36. Used with permission.*

Open wide our hearts,
open wide our minds,
open your word to us this morning, we pray;
let your holy light shine upon it and through it,
bringing us light and life. Amen.

Wisdom of Solomon 7:26-8:1 *(The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition)*

(Wisdom can do all things and renew all things)

Wisdom is the light that shines forth from everlasting light,
the flawless mirror of workings and actions of God,
and the perfect image of the Holy One's goodness.
Though alone of Her kind, She can do all things;
though unchanging She renews all things;
generation after generation She enters into holy souls
and makes them friends of God and prophets,
for God loves the one
who finds a home in Wisdom.
She is more beautiful than the sun
and more magnificent than all the stars in the sky.
When compared with daylight,
She excels in every way,
for the day always gives way to night,
but Wisdom never gives way to evil.
She stretches forth Her power
from one end of the earth to the other
and gently puts all things in their proper place.

Scripture: Mark 8:27-38 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition*)

(Who do people say that I am?)

Then he and the disciples set out for the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way, Jesus asked the disciples this question: "Who do people say that I am?"

They replied, "some say John the Baptizer; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets."

"And you," he went on to ask, "who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah!" But Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

Then Jesus began to teach them that the Promised One had to suffer much, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and religious scholars, be put to death, and rise again three days later. Jesus said these things quite openly.

Peter then took him aside and began to take issue with him. At this, Jesus turned around and, eyeing the disciples, reprimanded Peter: "Get out of my sight, you Satan! You are judging by human standards rather than by God's!"

Jesus summoned the crowd and the disciples and said, "If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very self, take up your cross and follow in my footsteps. If you would save your life, you'll lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, you'll save it. What would you gain if you were to win the whole world but lose your self in the process? What can you offer in exchange for your soul? Whoever in this faithless and corrupt generation is ashamed of me and my words will find, in turn, that the Promised One and the holy angels will be ashamed of that person, when all stand before our God in glory."

Prayer

It says in the Bible, O God,
that you created the world
through your Word.
Your Word is powerful!
And so are our words.
They can heal, create a smile,
be a declaration of love;
but they can also hurt
and destroy a sense of self-worth.
Give us your wisdom, God of the Word,
so that as a church and as individuals,
we use our words to build up and not to destroy. Amen.

Reflection: Who Do We Say Jesus Is?

Do you ever feel ashamed of your faith? Do you hesitate to identify as a Christian in certain areas of your life where people may not know you? On social media? I mean no judgment by these questions. I have had my very own cringe-worthy moments, when sitting on the train on the way to the seminary for the day, "What takes you to Toronto on the train today?" or when I go to a new hairdresser to get a cut, "What is it you do?"

I can almost predict what the response will be when I say, "I'm studying to be a minister" or "I am a minister." Sometimes I get the confused response, "Oh, which branch of the government are you in?" And then I proceed to explain that I mean minister as in a clergyperson. In a church. Sometimes I am asked what church, and happily, when I say The United Church, the response is often quite favourable. But other times people just respond to my identification as a Christian minister with "Oh." And the silence awkwardly sets in. Or in the case of a cousin of mine, when I announced my intention to study divinity, said, "Are you crazy? That's ridiculous! Why on earth would you want to do something like that??" So, I can truthfully say, to my chagrin, there are instances when I minimize the role Christianity plays in my life.

So we come to this week's Gospel, read the pointed words of Jesus to his followers, and cringe, "*Whoever in this faithless and corrupt generation is ashamed of me and my words will find, in turn, that the Promised One and the holy angels will be ashamed of that person, when all stand before our God in glory.*"

Ooh! That stings, more than a bit!

Now, to be fair, we might be hesitant to announce our faith because there are legitimate reasons to be ashamed. There are so many things, some truly terrible things that have been done in the name of Christ or by those who represent the Christian church—from the Crusades to pogroms against Jewish people, to our own United Church's involvement in residential schools.

This spring as the first reports emerged of the discovery of a mass grave at the Kamloops residential school, a friend and I went down the street and around the corner to the Indigenous gathering centre, called The Healing of the Seven Generations. We went to stand in solidarity with our Indigenous neighbours as they lit the Sacred Fire to mourn the 215 children who died and whose remains were found on the residential school grounds.

This happened in the midst of the lockdown, so I grabbed a mask out of my purse on the way out the door. When I got to the gathering, I realized the mask I had grabbed was the United Church mask that says "We are not alone"—a worthy affirmation, but I felt I simply could not put on that mask and name myself a member of one of the denominations that had been involved in the horrific project of the residential schools. So I stayed on the very edge of the crowd. But more importantly, I certainly understand about hesitating to announce our faith. The church (both historic and contemporary) has much to repent of and much to amend, and we can't pretend these profoundly consequential sins don't affect us.

But the essence of this week's reading is not about the church, not about the failings of Christians. It is about Jesus. Jesus *himself*. What will we do about *Jesus*?

The reading begins with Jesus asking his disciples directly, "Who do people say that I am?" By this Jesus is really asking what is the word on the street? What's the scuttlebutt? Is there any gossip? Any theories? Give me the scoop.

The disciples must have heard plenty because they are ready with answers. "People say you're John the Baptist. Some think you're Elijah. Others are saying you're one of the prophets."

Now we can't know for sure, but we might wonder if there were some **other** comments, or at least thoughts the disciples had, that our Gospel-writer Mark chose to edit out. Maybe comments like, "Some people say you're a fraud. A heretic, a madman, even a demon." "Some people talk about

you being Mary's illegitimate kid." "Some folks think you're a traitor to Rome." "Some folks really don't like you, saying things like, 'who does he think he is anyway?'"

Without affirming or denying their answers, Jesus just listens to the disciples' report of the speculations, conjectures, assumptions. Jesus lets them talk and seems to say whatever you've heard is okay, it's alright to name it as a place to start, and then we can examine it and decide if it fits for us.

We can discuss the rumours to begin with, but we can't just stay there. So Jesus then asks, "Who do **you** say that I am?"

Can you close your eyes and pause? Can you place yourself in the group of disciples talking to Jesus? Can you imagine the scene? Jesus has asked who **we** think he is. Perhaps there is a long, maybe a very long, silence. Maybe there is some shuffling of feet, some sidelong glances cast at one another, but certainly not at Jesus, "don't let him pick me, someone else can deal with this question."

And imagine Jesus, having made himself very vulnerable, just standing there waiting, patiently, wondering what his closest friends will say to him. Can they consider the rumours and decide what if anything of that fits for them? Can they name what is in their hearts? Can they articulate their experience of Jesus? Do they really know him? Trust him? Love him?

So if it's not about what other people are saying, then they have to, **we** have to, claim our **own** understanding of Jesus' identity. Sure, there are creeds and traditions, theologies and doctrines. But what about our faith? At some point it must become personal. Who do **you** say that I am?

Our scripture then brings us right back full circle: Are we ashamed of Jesus?

And right on cue Peter is there—bold, reckless, impetuous Peter. When the shuffling and coughing and uncomfortable silence gets too much, Peter is there to say who he thinks Jesus is: "You are the Messiah."

Which is the perfect answer, the gospel in a nutshell. Right?

Well, not really. Because great as that answer might sound to us, Jesus tells Peter to keep his mouth shut, tell no one. Why would he do that? Why keep it a secret? Isn't the whole point of this ministry and journeying about the countryside for the very purpose of giving people the hope that will come from the presence of the Messiah?

But no, Jesus silences him, and **then** proceeds to give those gathered a grim description of what will come in Jerusalem: rejection, suffering, and death. Peter is so taken aback by this gruesome tale that he pulls Jesus aside and tells him to knock it off. But Peter's comment hits a raw nerve with Jesus, so much so that he rebukes Peter in return. And not just a rebuke, but a shocking rebuke, that still sounds so harsh, even to our ears two millennia later: "Get out of my sight, you Satan! You are judging by human standards rather than by God's!"

Poor Peter, from the perfect answer to being called Satan in two short exchanges. How did it go so wrong? After all, the answer is right, Jesus is the Messiah. He knows the title, the name.

But when Jesus challenges his understanding of just what "Messiah" actually entails, Peter cringes in embarrassment, in disbelief, in shame. He seems to be saying, "That's **not** what I signed up for. That's **not** how the **Messiah** should behave. Torture? Crucifixion? Humiliation? What kind of

Messiah **are** you that you are willing just to give up? To surrender? To die? And you want me to associate myself with you, and lose **everything**?”

Peter may name Jesus the Messiah, and be right, but so naming him is just the very beginning of Peter’s spiritual journey. Jesus is, in effect, saying, “Yes, I am the Messiah. But you have no idea what “Messiah” means. You’re not even ready to **know** what Messiah means; you can’t stand to even have me talk about it. You want to make me into **your** image of Messiah. You want to be in control, you want your own comfort. You’re ashamed to identify with the Saviour that I really am. You want a Saviour who is glamorous, impressive, filled with power and greatness. Peter, you still have so much to learn.”

What about as we reflect on Peter’s human, earnest, misguided answer. Who do we say Jesus is? Sure, we know the right answers: the Promised One, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Christ. But what do these words really mean to us? Do we have an agenda about Messiah-ship? Is it an agenda coloured by our own wants, valuing the comforts we value, seeking the same life goals we seek? Or is our understanding of Jesus the Jesus who makes Peter flinch in shame? The Jesus of humility and surrender? Self-denial and sacrifice? Death and resurrection?

Who we think Jesus is will determine how far we’ll go to follow him. How large or small a cross we’ll bear in his name. How fearlessly we’ll profess him to a world that needs the love and healing he offers. How humbly we’ll repent of the church’s failures, and begin again to be Christ’s hands and feet to those in need. How boldly we’ll dedicate ourselves to sharing the paradoxical gospel of the cross, the grave, the empty tomb?

Who do we say Jesus is? Do we know? Do we ask ourselves? And if the deep and truthful answers make us ashamed, we have to ask does Jesus deserve that shame? And if he doesn’t, what will it take to turn our shame into joy, surrender, deference and love?

Hymn: Take Up Your Cross VU561

- 1 Take up your cross, the Saviour said,
 if you would my disciple be;
 take up your cross with willing heart,
 and humbly follow after me.

- 2 Take up your cross; let not its weight
 fill your weak spirit with alarm;
 Christ's strength shall bear your spirit up,
 and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.

- 3 Take up your cross, heed not the shame,
 nor let your foolish pride rebel;
 your Saviour once accepted death
 upon a cross, on Calvary's hill.

- 4 Take up your cross, and follow Christ,
 think not till death to lay it down;
 for only those who bear the cross
 may hope to wear the glorious crown.

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

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

Let us pray for the church, the nations,
and all people seeking God's mercy and care, saying,
God of love, hear our prayer.

We pray for the church in every place,
that wherever people gather in your name,
you make us able to listen to each other with open hearts.
Give your people unity, O God,
and replace divisiveness with reconciliation.
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who serve the church
as musicians, ushers, greeters, pastors, council members,
teachers, and student leaders, as architects and cooks,
as repairers and cleaners, and in all other ministries.
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for Muslims and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists,
people of indigenous religions everywhere,
that their paths may lead—with ours—to greater understanding
of the goodness of faith in its many languages and forms.
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for this amazing earth, for clean water,
rich soils, abundant sunshine, and all the foods that you have made
for our health and enjoyment.
Give all people the gratitude to share,
especially with those who do not have such riches
and who today are hungry.
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the leaders of our nation . . .
for our Prime Minister and Members of Parliament,
our Premier and Members of the Provincial Parliament,
Mayor and town councilors,
for the leaders asserting power in other nations,
for nations in trouble at this time . . .
and for peacemakers and diplomats

as they work to shape a reformed people.
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who suffer from the horrors of war and famine,
for children who do not know the reason for their pain
and have no power to change their lot,
and for the animals and plants damaged by human conflicts.
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those suffering from all forms of injustice, brokenness, or illness,
especially all who have asked for the prayers of this congregation
and for those whose well-being we hold in our hearts,
named now aloud or silently . . .
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

God of eternity, certain days remind us of tragedy and death,
but we know that all days are redeemed and held in your grace.
We remember those who have died on this day,
those who will die today,
and all whose lives have enriched ours
named now aloud or silently . . .
Keep alive in us the hope of the resurrection.
God of love, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands we commend those for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy through your Son, Jesus the Christ.
Remembering him, we pray,

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 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 web-site
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/melville-united-church>
3. Call or email Lynda, to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance payments (PAR).
4. 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 *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 2. Copyright 2015.*

God of wisdom,
may this offering serve
as a powerful witness
to this world in need.
Guide us as we administer
the gifts that you have given us
for the building of your kingdom.
In Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn: Be Thou My Vision VU 642

- 1 Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;
naught be all else to me save that thou art,
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;
I ever with thee, and thou in my life;
thou loving parent, thy child may I be,
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
- 3 Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 Great God of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

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

When people ask, Who is this Jesus?
do not be ashamed of the gospel;
share with them that he loved the world so much
that he lived for us, suffered for us, died for us,
and rose again for us,
and invite them to follow him.

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

May God, our Wisdom, pour out God's
thoughts in you
and make God's words known to you.
May Jesus Christ, our Messiah,
give you the strength to carry your cross and
to follow him.
And may the Holy Spirit, our Tongue of fire,
guide our words and our actions,
as we strive to bless the world with our witness.
Amen.

Household Prayer: Morning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word®**
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As I open my eyes,
I can see the heavens that tell of your glory.
Allow me to be part of this creation
that proclaims your handiwork
and your real presence in the world. Amen.

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As the day winds down,
allow me to find satisfaction in the thought
that I have taken my cross and followed you.
Allow me to find rest in the knowledge
that I did not act as if I was ashamed of you.
And if I failed you, forgive me
and allow me to find solace
in the new mercies of the morning. Amen.