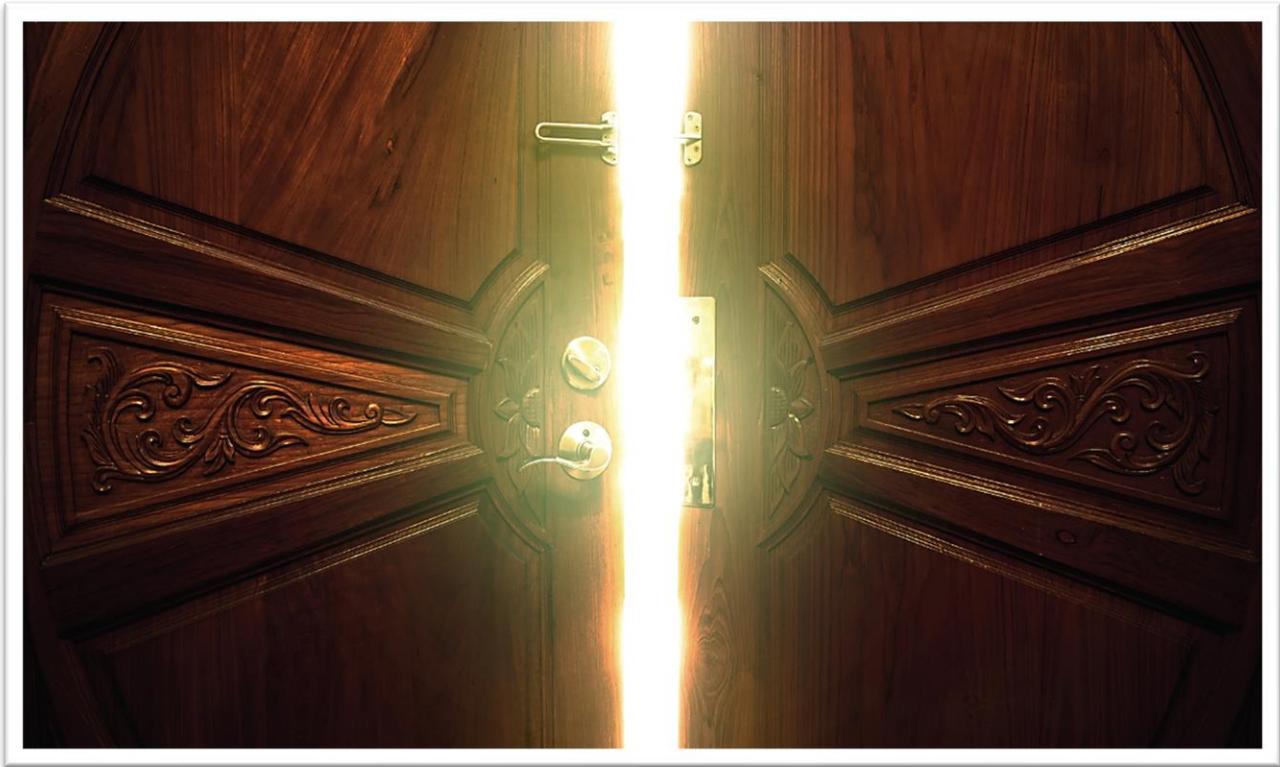




**Celebrating
175 Years**



September 26, 2021

Melville United Church

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Minister of Worship, Pastoral Care & Outreach

Faith Formation & Youth

Ministry of Music Team

Office Administrator

Custodian

Chair of Church Council

Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

Office hours

E-Mail

Web Site

Pastoral Care Numbers

Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Martha Duncan

Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber

Lynda Rivet

Robert Mitchell

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9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. T., Th. & F.

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Melville United Church
September 26, 2021
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Third Sunday in Creation Time

Presiding today - Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Welcome

My name is Lynda Goy-Flint and I join in ministry with you here at Melville United Church in Fergus, Ontario. We gather in community today – September 26, 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 Season after Pentecost, and the third 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 continuing through Thanksgiving Sunday. Creation Time is a season when we consider God's good creation and our relationship to it. Some have called creation God's First Bible. 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.

Announcements

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: *(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: *adapted from a Call to Worship by Spill the Beans Resources Team, **spill the beans: worship and learning resources for all ages, Issue 40**, p. 49. Copyright 2021.*

You are God,

who made heaven and earth.

You are God,

who is on our side,

through thick and thin.

Our help is in the name of God.

Blessing be upon us

and all our neighbour creatures within the created world.

Blessings be known

by us who worship you this day,

and all your beloved creation.

Our help is in God.

Let us worship God.

Hymn: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

VU 232

1 Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

- 2 All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.
- 3 You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.
- 4 Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life.

Opening Prayer: *Jean Leckie, Gathering: Pentecost 2 2021 p.27. Used with permission.*

We thank you, Creator God,
for the diversity, the complexity, and the interconnectedness
of the world in which we live.

We thank you for the mystery of it, the beauty and the bounty.

In our quest to explore and understand it,
keep us mindful of our place in your world,
as one of its creatures,
one with possibility and responsibility.

As we worship, draw us closer to your mystery and your majesty. Amen.

Ministry of Music: Marvellous Grace of Our Loving Lord *arranged by John Innes – Colleen Weber*

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

In faithful prayer there is power to save the sick;
anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

Therefore let us confess our sins
and pray for one another
so that we may be healed.

Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation *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 unity,
we live in a world where our lives move
between inclusivity and exclusivity.
We often move toward the latter,
trying to rid from our circles
those who do not think like us,
act like us,
or look like us.

**Forgive our need to reject
and to always be on the lookout
for those things that make us different.
Give us the eyes of our Teacher,
who knows unconditional love and compassion
and sees us all as one,
for it is in his name that we pray. Amen.**

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

My siblings,
if anyone among you wanders
from the truth and is brought back by another,
you should know that whoever brings back one
from wandering
will save that one's soul from death and will cover
a multitude of sins.
Rejoice! You have been brought back
by the redemption of God
and forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Thanks be to God, we can live in peace!

"...In the Midst"

Provide several specific suggestions for prayer that both children and adults can try. A "breath" prayer is a short prayer that can be prayed throughout the day. It consists of two short phrases said in one breath while breathing in, and while breathing out. For example: (while breathing in) "When I feel all alone"; (while breathing out) "God, be with me," or "When I'm mad enough to punch, God, help me to be kind." Many disciples use the same breath prayer for a day or a week.

Hymn: Lord, Speak to Me

VU589

- 1 Lord, speak to me that I may speak
in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let me seek
your straying children lost and lone.
- 2 O lead me, so that I may lead
the wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, so that I may feed
your hungering ones with manna sweet.

3 O teach me, so that I may teach
the precious truths which you impart;
and wing my words, that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart.

4 O fill me with your fullness, Lord,
until my very heart o'erflows
in kindling thought and glowing word,
your love to tell, your praise to show.

Scripture:

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

Your Word is our salt;
without it, we lose our being,
our joy, and our ability to endure.
Open our hearts and our minds
to listen, to really listen,
to your Word today. **Amen.**

Scripture: James 5:13-20 *(New Revised Standard Version NRSV)*

(The sick should be anointed by the elders)

The Prayer of Faith

Are any among you suffering? They should pray.
Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise.
Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them,
anointing them with oil in the name Christ.
The prayer of faith will save the sick, and Christ will raise them up;
and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.
Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.
The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.
Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain,
and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.
Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.
My brothers and sisters,
if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another,
you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering
will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Scripture: Mark 9:38-50 *(New Revised Standard Version NRSV)*

(If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off)

Another Exorcist

John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name,
and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.'
But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him;
for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me.
Whoever is not against us is for us.
For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink
because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.'

Temptations to Sin

'If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea.

If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off;

it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off;

it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell.'

And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out;

it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell,

where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

'For everyone will be salted with fire.

Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it?

Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.'

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 unquenchable fire

and overflowing grace,

cast out the demons that oppress us;

take away the things that make us stumble.

Lead us into your realm of life

and season us with your peace;

in the name of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reflection: How Do We Keep Our Doors?

Mark 9:38-50

Most of us have seen the stereotypical examples of bouncers in movies or television shows. Just the very word "bouncer" conjures up images of powerful six-foot-plus tall body builders with black armbands, steel-toed boots, and menacing expressions on their faces, grimly guarding the entrances of bars and nightclubs.

Regardless of the accuracy of the image, a bouncer's job is to provide security, keep order, refuse entry to people who aren't allowed inside, and "bounce" or throw out those who, for whatever reason, have forfeited their welcome. In a broader sense, a bouncer's job is to serve as a gatekeeper for the business or institution they serve. Who is an insider and who is an intruder? Who deserves entry, and who is best left outside in the alley for the good of the venue?

Our gospel reading this week includes the account of zealous, would-be "bouncers." The disciples notice "someone" who has been casting out demons in Jesus' name, and in keeping with our image of bouncers, they don their black armbands and bar the doors: "Teacher, we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."

Unsurprisingly, Jesus sees no reason for concern: "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us."

When we reflect on this story, we might be reminded that the church's penchant for spiritual gatekeeping has a long history. We might also be reminded that God has spent a lot of time throwing open the doors we run around closing. It's kind of ironic that **we** feel more zealous about the borders of God's kin-dom than God does!

Why is this? Why have human beings felt it necessary to take on the role of God's bouncers? What is it that has encouraged the faithful to shut the doors on some of the suspicious characters who populate society? Why do we Christians place so many stumbling blocks in the paths of those who seek God, those whose ways we don't immediately recognize? What is it about us that means we are so clear about judging differences when we are not nearly so clear about celebrating all the commonalities that bind us together?

I remember having a discussion among a group of church people about what it would take to get kicked out of the United Church. This had been an ongoing discussion, because we couldn't think of a way to get kicked, or "bounced" out of our denomination. And so we wondered, will we let just **anyone** in? Will we let just **anyone** stay?? Don't we have standards? Don't we need to consider our reputation?

This seems like the same kind of thinking that the disciples were using. They wanted to make sure that the one or ones who were casting out demons in Jesus' name did not besmirch his name, that they were doing it right, that they were honouring the reputation of their beloved Teacher; they were concerned for his vulnerability. They were well-intentioned people with good motives, wanting to honour and protect the sacred.

And so they balk at an "outsider" exorcising demons in Jesus' name. Never mind that the fellow was out there doing good. Never mind that he is alleviating suffering, healing brokenness, restoring people to community, and trusting in the name of Jesus to provide powerful and necessary healing. But of course, the difficulty is, that he's not doing these things **in the right way**. He's doing it differently, off on the margins, without supervision, away from where the disciples might wield appropriate influence and control over his work. "He's not following **us**." What if he's getting it all wrong? What if he's using the wrong words? What if his unvetted way of doing things, following Jesus differently than the disciples all are, gains a following? What if, heaven forbid, as a result the disciples themselves have to **change**?

Jesus, the one they are trying to protect, doesn't seem to care much about their "what ifs." Jesus, for his part, is far more focused on what really matters—the culmination of his ministry on the cross—to waste time on gatekeeping. By this point in Mark's Gospel, Jesus is speaking openly and disturbingly frequently about his impending death. And not just talking about it, but actively making his way to Jerusalem, away from safety, and towards crucifixion. He knows he's running out of time. He knows he has mere days left to prepare his still clueless disciples about what's coming.

So he ramps things up. We can feel it in the reading: Jesus' growing sense of urgency and frustration and impatience. "PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT'S IMPORTANT!" he seems to be pleading. "Faith is hard! So much is at stake! What you say and do, what you focus on, what you prioritize as my disciples—these things matter! So look at the stumbling blocks you place in front of, not just those so-called outsiders, but in front of yourselves and each other. Look at how pleased you are to be excluding people who live, believe, worship, serve, and practice differently than you do. Look at how smug and superior you feel when your siblings fail. Look at how insecure and tenuous your own faith must be, if its survival depends on your dismantling someone else's."

When we look at the radical nature of Jesus' openness, inclusivity and hospitality, it can be a shocking experience. Every time I think I've made my circle wide enough, Jesus says, "No, make it wider." Every time I think I've drawn an appropriate line in the sand between "us" and "them," saint

and sinner, inside and outside, Jesus pours the sand back over the line until it disappears. “Whoever is not against us is for us.” This is an amazing, seemingly backward declaration.

Into the group of us talking about what it would take to get kicked out of the United Church came a new voice. A voice of wisdom that said, “why are we talking about kicking anyone out? Is that our role? How about we just welcome everyone in? Isn’t that what God and God through Jesus Christ does? Isn’t that what Jesus would tell us this faith is all about?” And that voice reminded us of a banner in the sanctuary picturing the doors of the church, not closed, but open in welcome.

Whoever doesn’t oppose the beautiful and salvific works of God—mercy, love, kindness, justice, liberation, peacemaking, healing, nurturing—is on Jesus’ side, and our work is to welcome them, host them, include them, and love them.

And we at Melville United are on the path to trying to do that very thing. How can we best engage with the community of Fergus and area? How can we make the best use of this grand building with which we’ve been bestowed, to make sure it is as open and welcoming, hospitable and present for this community as it can possibly be? From dance groups and yoga classes to Early On and community suppers, we’ve made a good start. Now we need to explore what is next for the welcoming in of those outside.

We might very well feel apprehensive, even squeamish about the language in this week’s Gospel reading that seems harsh and unforgiving. It’s not easy to read Jesus’ words about millstones, missing limbs and unquenchable fire without flinching. But I believe we do ourselves and each other a disservice if we assume that Jesus means to condemn us with this language. I don’t think this passage is about condemnation—it’s not prescriptive, it’s descriptive; it’s about reality. It’s about our tendencies as human beings: to exclude, to judge, to condemn, to compare, to somehow see ourselves as God’s bouncers.

But the truth is, as we are seeking to do here in this place, we are called to be God’s generous and welcoming **hosts**. Hosts who throw the doors of the kin-dom wide open. Hosts who understand that there’s enough divine goodness, mercy and justice to go around. Hosts who respond with joy and gratitude whenever “deeds of power” are done in Jesus’ name.

Whoever is not against us is for us. If Jesus himself has declared this, then we can trust that our work is to fling open the doors of our church, stop worrying about protecting boundaries, and come in out of the rain in the alley. It may call for a change of focus, a change from the good and busy work inside to looking out. Maybe instead of bouncers holding the doors closed, our role is better suited to being hosts holding them open.

Hymn: Draw the Circle Wide

MV145

Chorus:

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still,
let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

God, the still point of the circle,
‘round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held for ever,
in God’s gracious arms. *Chorus*

Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call. *Chorus*

Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open ev'ry door. *Chorus*

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.

Call: Pour out your healing grace, O God;

*Response: **send forth your Spirit to save us.***

Scripture promises us

Jas. 5:13–20

*that the prayers of God's people
are powerful and effective.*

In this hope, we call on God's name, saying:

Pour out your healing grace, O God;

send forth your Spirit to save us.

For those who are sick and suffering . . .

Pour out your healing grace, O God;

send forth your Spirit to save us.

For those who are burdened by sin . . .

Pour out your healing grace, O God;

send forth your Spirit to save us.

For nations, crumbling in conflict . . .

Pour out your healing grace, O God;

send forth your Spirit to save us.

For neighbors, divided by fear . . .

Pour out your healing grace, O God;

send forth your Spirit to save us.

For the church, longing for renewal . . .

Pour out your healing grace, O God;

send forth your Spirit to save us.

*For the earth, groaning for peace and health . . .
Pour out your healing grace, O God;
send forth your Spirit to save us.*

*God of new life, raise us up
in the power of the risen Christ
so that we may lift our hearts again
in songs of thanks and praise;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.***

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.

Moment for Mission

Orange Shirt Day, September 30, 2021

Youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2rfb9bNW9U>

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 website
<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 *Amy B. Hunter, Ministry Matters: Worship Elements: September 26, 2021. Used with permission.*

Giving God, we can never match your generosity.

When we are in need, you are at our side, present to us even in our darkest moments.

You rescue us from harm.

Make us into a people who celebrate your goodness,
drawing others into the celebration of your many blessings.

Receive our offerings, even if they are as small as a drink for someone who thirsts.

**Transform them into the mystery of your reign here and now on earth,
in the name of Jesus, your greatest gift. Amen.**

Hymn: Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life **VU 681**

- 1 Where cross the crowded ways of life,
 where sound the cries of race and clan,
 above the noise of selfish strife,
 we hear your words of life again.

- 2 In haunts of wretchedness and need,
 on shadowed thresholds, dark with fears,
 from paths where hide the lures of greed,
 we catch the vision of your tears.

- 3 The cup of water given for you
 still holds the freshness of your grace;
 yet long these multitudes to view
 the strong compassion of your face.

- 4 O Jesus, from the mountain side,
 make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
 among these restless throngs abide,
 and tread the city's streets again,

- 5 till all the world shall learn your love
 and follow where your feet have trod,
 till glorious from your heaven above
 shall come the city of our God.

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

God has created all things.

God has rescued us from sin and suffering.

Let us go forth, seeking to be on God's side.

Jesus Christ finds us when we wander far from God.

Let us go forth, seeking to be on God's side.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to welcome all
into the reign of God's love.

**Let us go forth, seeking to be on God's side,
bringing the love of Christ everywhere we go.**

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 changing 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.

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 the grace of our Saviour, Christ,
The love of God,
And the community of the Holy Spirit
Be with us this day and always. Amen.

A Prayer for Orange Shirt Day, September 30, 2021

Today we wear orange
to remember and honour all the Indigenous children who went to residential schools.
Today we wear orange and we pray
for the residential school and intergenerational survivors who are still struggling.
Today we wear orange and we are thankful
for those who speak the truth, and who work to shine a light on injustice.
Today we wear orange in the name of compassion and the spirit of truth and reconciliation.
Help us, God, to remember and act on this this every day.
Amen.

—*This prayer was inspired by Honarine Scott's Orange Shirt Day [blog. https://united-church.ca/blogs/round-table/september-30-orange-shirt-day](https://united-church.ca/blogs/round-table/september-30-orange-shirt-day)*