



Celebrating
176 Years



March 20, 2022

Melville United Church

300 St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON N1M 1N9

Mailing address: PO Box 41, Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

519-843-1781

Team Ministry

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

Allan Hons

Alison Rainford, Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

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

secretary@melvilleunited.com

www.melvilleunited.com

709-682-8756, 519-843-3841

Melville United Church
March 20, 2022
Third Sunday of Lent

Presiding today - Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Welcome

I greet you in the name of Jesus the Christ, companion on the way.

We gather in community today – March 20, 2022 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. We encourage people to come out to worship in the sanctuary. Double vaccinations, masking and hand sanitizing are all required to ensure the safety of all in attendance, and there is ample space for people to maintain social distancing. For those who are joining us online or by reading, we invite you to have a candle or tea light available.

As we gather in this season of Lent, we look inward, considering ourselves and our relationship with God: Creator, Christ and Spirit.

Announcements

- **Spring is around the corner!**

Are you dreaming of spring? Us too! The Garden Team is getting ready to decide which veggies to include and what our growing plan will look like for the upcoming season. Join us on Monday, March 21 at 7:00pm to help get the plan in motion. See you then! Any questions please contact LindaMae Ogilvie at ogilvielms@mail.com.

- **Ukraine Appeal**

The invasion of Ukraine is costing precious lives and creating a humanitarian crisis as people flee to safety. Over a million people, displaced from their homes, are seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Many have lost friends, loved ones, and property; struggle to meet their basic needs; and face an uncertain future. United Church Mission & Service partners are responding to the rapidly unfolding crisis—visit our website at <https://united-church.ca>, scroll down to Ukraine Crisis and click on the Act Now button to find out how you can show your support and make a gift.

- **Annual Congregational Meeting**

On April 3 we will be having our annual congregational meeting. There will be a short service at 11 and the meeting will take place immediately afterward in the Sanctuary. While we apologize for the inconvenience, we will not be live streaming the meeting, nor offering the possibility of virtually attending. What there is, is lots of room in the Sanctuary to spread out, enjoy a snack if you wish to bring one (this is a BYOS or bring your own snack event) and hear what your council has been up to for the past two years and what the future may hold. You are invited to join us.

- **Easter Take Out Dinner from St. James Anglican Church**

Let us do the cooking for Easter! Saturday, April 16th, with pick up at 5:00pm or 5:30pm. Phone in orders by April 8th to (519)843-5748 or (519) 843-2554. The Menu: Turkey with stuffing and cranberries, mashed potatoes, peas, carrots, coleslaw and a bun, and a choice for dessert of apple crisp or pumpkin pie.

- Community Theatre Camp**
Boys and girls, ages 6 to 16, who love theatre are wanted on stage at Guelph United Performers Community Theatre Camp! We start on Monday and perform our Show for family and friends on Friday. For more information guelphunitedperformers.com or contact Barbara Moldenhauer, bmoldenhauer2014@gmail.com.
- Proposed Development Next Door**
As many of you are aware, there is a proposed development in the very early stages of the approval process next door. Melville council is actively engaging with legal counsel to defend Melville's interests as this matter progresses. Council will provide additional information as the situation progresses and details become clearer.
- Blood Donor Clinic**
Thursday March 31st 2:30pm to 7:30pm at the Fergus Legion 500 Blair St. Fergus. Book now at blood.ca or on the GiveBlood app or call 1-888-236-6283.
- Trinity United presents Roast Beef in the Springtime ... A Drive Through, Take Out Dining Experience – Thursday, March 31st** – in collaboration with Jesse's at the Guelph Country Club. Including roast beef, honey glazed carrots, peas, coleslaw, mashed potatoes & gravy and Trinity's own chocolate brownie with raspberry coulis. Cost is \$25/dinner. Order by March 26 by calling Kathy at 519-829-9622 or emailing kathyrobertstephens@gmail.com. Pick up is between 4:15-6:30 pm.
- Round Table on Food Security and Faith**
Held by Zoom on Thursday, April 21st at 7pm, hosted by the United Church's Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls, Western Ontario Waterways and Shining Waters Regional Councils. Discover various and diverse food justice ministries in our regions, offer your challenges and celebrations in these ministries, hear from Open Food Network.
- From the Mission and Discipleship Commission:**

 - Young Adults Together retreat for 19+ years in Fingal ON near St. Thomas from Friday April 29th to Sunday May 1st. Information and registration is on the WOWCRUCC.ca website under Events.
 - Camp Bimini is having a drive through fundraising dinner on March 27th at St. Mary's United Church, St. Mary's ON
 - Camp Menesetung invites you to their "Clean Up Camp" day (pizza lunch provided) in the Goderich area, June 19th 9am-4pm. Check the camp's website
 - Please pray for several other projects funded by our Mission & Service dollars throughout the Region
- 2021-2022 Gifts with Vision** catalogues are out. These gifts are perfect for those difficult to buy for people. There's no going out, no standing in line, no wrapping. And you will be helping out those in need near and far. Items address healing and reconciliation, leadership, counter racism, wellness and safe spaces, education, poverty and hunger, the future, Mission & Service. Gifts range from \$5 to \$140. Gifts include food for the north, help build a well, purchasing Covid vaccines for the Global South and East, and much more. You can find the full catalogue at www.giftswithvision.ca.
- 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 Rev. Lynda 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.

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

Land Acknowledgement *Peter Chynoweth, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022, p.30. Used with permission.*

This land on which we gather is the Traditional land of the

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

We worship Creator on this land and acknowledge with respect the thousands of years of ceremony and relationship that are etched in footprint, fire, and faithfulness on the soil and rock that surrounds us.

Lighting the Lenten Candle: *Juanita Austin, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022, p.30. Used with permission.*

(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)

Holy One, as we light our Lenten candle today,
may we be mindful of how your love persistently shines even in our times of wandering,
our times of searching for the truth,
our times of doubt and pain.
Be the light of our lives, we pray;
bring us back to you again.
(Light the Lenten candle.)

Call to Worship: *Beth W. Johnston, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022, p.31. Used with permission.*

The news is bleak.

The power of faith is strong.

The world is bleak and scary.

The love of Christ can drive out all fear.

Let us latch on to the wisdom and power of Christ's peace.

May it transform our living in this time of worship.

Hymn: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy **VU 271**

- 1 There's a wideness in God's mercy
 like the wideness of the sea;
 there's a kindness in God's justice
 which is more than liberty.
- 2 There is no place where earth's sorrows
 are more felt than up in heaven;
 there is no place where earth's failings
 have such gracious judgement given.
- 3 There is plentiful redemption
 in the blood that Christ has shed;
 there is joy for all the members
 in the sorrows of the Head.

- 4 Troubled souls, why will you scatter
like a crowd of frightened sheep?
Foolish hearts, why will you wander
from a love so true and deep?
- 5 For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

Opening Prayer (in unison): *Jani Francis, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022, p.32. Used with permission.*

**Creator and Sustainer of all that is,
we offer thanks for what you have given us:
the healing, the helping, the coming together of your people in this time of change and challenge.
Loving God, remind us through Spirit:
We are never alone.
You are ever near.
You are with us in every breath, every heartbeat, every movement of the outstretched arms of
your children.
Holy Presence, hear our prayer:
for our families, our communities, workers, and vulnerable people, that your healing energy is at
work today and every day.
Let us be comforted in this, knowing that God is with us; we are not alone. Amen.**

Ministry of Music “Around You, O Lord Jesus” by H. Thomisson, *Den Danske Salmebog*, Setting by
Stephen Gabrielsen *played by Colleen Weber*

Call to Reconciliation *Thom M. Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies: Liturgy w/ communion for March 20, 2022 (Lent 3 -
C) <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>. Used with permission.*

Do you think that because you have spoken hurtfully, or failed to help, or left God behind as you
travel through each day, that God forgets you? God’s love is as constant as the sun; God’s
forgiveness is as sure as the stars in the night sky. Let us join together, as we pray, saying,

Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation (in unison) *Susan Girard, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022, p.34.
Used with permission.*

**Holy One, we get so used to our ways
that we forget we are called to growth and change.
We cling to that which we know and are comfortable with
instead of embracing the new thing to which you are calling us.
Forgive us for the times we are closed-minded and closed-hearted,
when we have refused to hear your words of life and growth.
Open us to your wisdom that we may follow you wherever you lead us. Amen.**

Silence is kept

Words of Assurance *Susan Girard, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022, p.34. Used with permission, alt.*

Before we were born, God knew everything about us. We are loved and forgiven beyond measure. We are God's beloved people! Let us rejoice and be glad in that profound truth.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-9 *(The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition)*

Come, buy wine and milk without money!

"All you who are thirsty,

come to the water!

You who have no money,

come, buy food and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk,

without money, without price!

Why spend your money for what is not bread,

your wages for what fails to satisfy!

Heed me, and you will eat well,

you will delight in rich fare;

bend your ear and come to me,

listen, that you may have life:

I will make an everlasting Covenant with you—

in fulfillment of the blessings promised to David.

See, I have made of you to be a witness to the peoples,

a leader and commander of the nations.

See, you will summon nations you never knew,

and nations that never knew you will come hurrying to you—

for the sake of YHWH, the Holy One of Israel,

who will glorify you.

See me, YHWH, while I may still be found,

call upon me while I am near!

Let the corrupt abandon their ways,

the evil their thoughts.

Let them return to YHWH, and I will have mercy on them;

return to God, for I will freely pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

nor are your way, my ways," says YHWH.

"As high as the heavens are above the earth,

so high are my ways above your ways

and my thoughts above your thoughts."

“...In the Midst”



There has been some discussion in recent weeks about the word “Alleluia” and whether it is appropriate to use the word Alleluia or Hallelujah during Lent. Some understand Alleluia, a word of celebration and rejoicing, to not fit with the spirit and intention of Lent—a time of quiet, introspection, journeying inward to discover more about ourselves and our relationship with God, and ultimately to connect with God.

In some traditions, to help highlight this intention and mood for Lent, Alleluias are “boxed up,” put away, for the six and a half weeks of Lent. Often, it is done during Children’s Time. The children find all the cards with the word “Alleluia” printed on them, scattered in the nave or throughout the sanctuary, and put them in a big box. Then, on Easter Sunday, the Alleluias are unboxed, and I’ve seen the Alleluia cards attached to the strings of helium balloons so they literally fly out of the box in celebration. It is quite fun.

But I think there is no need to put the Alleluias away in the first place. Every Sunday in Lent, in fact, every Sunday throughout the whole year, is understood as a “little Easter.” And so, Alleluias have a place in every Sunday worship service.

If we were in doubt of the appropriateness of Alleluias and celebration, we have the invitation to delight in abundance, the abundance that God provides:

“All you who are thirsty,
come to the water!
You who have no money,
come, buy food and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk,
without money, without price!
...
Heed me, and you will eat well,
you will delight in rich fare;

It seems quite at odds with fasting and depriving ourselves that we usually associate with Lent.

But the difference is, this feasting, this abundance is of God, from God. The most meaningful and fulfilling Lenten journeys include an encounter with God’s abundant mercy, grace, and forgiveness. In this Lenten scripture reading, Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of God’s abundance, and then encourages, instructs the people to come to God:

bend your ear and come to me,
listen, that you may have life:
...
See me, YHWH, while I may still be found,

call upon me while I am near!
Let the corrupt abandon their ways,
the evil their thoughts.
Let them return to YHWH, and I will have mercy on them;
return to God, for I will freely pardon.



This week, while we are buying our milk or our wine or bread may we think of the gift of God's love—and change our hearts' direction, coming near to God to find restoration and life. Alleluia!
May we find God in the midst of all our days.

Hymn: Beneath the Cross of Jesus

VU 135

- 1 Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand:
the shadow of a mighty rock
within a weary land,
a home within the wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat
and the burden of the day.
- 2 Upon the cross of Jesus
my eyes at times can see
the very dying form of one
who suffered there for me;
and from my smitten heart, with tears,
two wonders I confess,
the wonder of his glorious love,
and my unworthiness.
- 3 I take, O cross, your shadow
for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of his face,
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all, the cross.

Scripture: Luke 13:1-9 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition*)

The parable of the barren fig tree

On the same occasion, there were people present who told Jesus about some Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their own sacrifices.

Jesus replied, "Do you think these Galileans were the greatest sinners in Galilee just because they suffered this? Not at all!

I tell you, you'll all come to the same end unless you change your ways. Or take those eighteen who were killed by a falling tower in Siloam. Do you think they were more guilty than anyone else who has lived in Jerusalem? Certainly not! I tell you, you'll all come to the same end unless you change your ways."

Jesus told this parable: "There was a fig tree growing in a vineyard. The owner came out looking for fruit on it, but didn't find any. The owner said to the vine dresser, 'Look here! For three years now I've come out in search of fruit on this fig tree and have found none. Cut it down. Why should it clutter up the ground?'

"In reply, the vine dresser said, 'Please leave it one more year while I hoe around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine; if not, then let it be cut down.'"

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

Prayer *Beth W. Johnston, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022, p.35, alt. Used with permission.*

We have come here seeking a beacon for our path,
guidance for our journey,
and companions on the way.
Open us to your promise and your will, O God,
as we receive and break open your word today. Amen.

May the words I speak and the reflection that we all share
find a response that is worthy of you,
most Just, most Loving, and most Compassionate God. Amen.

David Sparks, Summerland, B.C.

Reflection: Repent and Be Fruitful

I remember when a friend phoned to tell a group of us, gathered for a Thanksgiving dinner, that her son had been diagnosed with brain cancer. He was 9 or 10 at the time and it was so hard to fathom that young boy, who was always so vital and lively, being stricken with such an illness, and having to endure the treatment, which included test after test, surgery, radiation and long stays in the hospital.

I was quite upset by the fact that this had happened, especially after his father had only shortly

before been diagnosed with thyroid cancer. I wondered how this could have happened to people who were working hard to live a life of faith. I contacted a minister I knew and asked how this could be. Was there something evil in the world that their family had fallen victim to? Was this somehow a punishment for some shortcoming? What was God's part in the midst of this tragedy? I was convinced there had to be a reason, and it was important to figure out what it was.

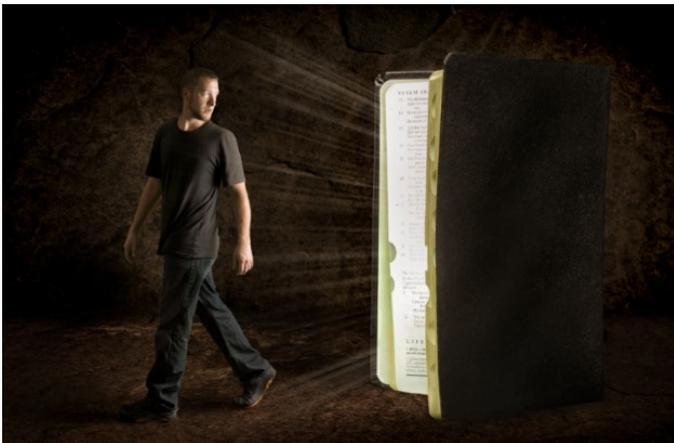
I have since learned a lot more about theology, illness and bad things happening without regard for how good those affected have been.

In our Gospel reading I think the people have come before Jesus with a similar sort of confusion. Galileans killed by Pilate; a tower falling on the crowd below, killing 18 people who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Why did these things happen? Were the victims of Pilate the worst sinners of Galilee, or those killed in the tower mishap the worst offenders of Jerusalem?

And Jesus tells them No. But not just No. Jesus also tells them that if **they** do not repent, they will **perish** just as the unfortunate Galileans did, as the doomed Jerusalemites did.

Well now the discussion has gone from curiosity about those others, to a little too close to home. The people gathered who had thought they were having a theological or intellectual debate, now find their own futures looking a little grim.

Repent—that word again.



It seems to come up a lot during Lent and a lot in Luke's Gospel. The Greek word, that Luke wrote, is *metanoia*, meaning "to change one's mind." But it's about more than just coming up with a different idea or a different point of view. As commentator Dennis E. Smith says, "It signifies changing the focus of one's life, changing one's moral direction, a dynamic change in one's way of living. To repent is to live in a distinct and different way. Luke [explains] the full ramifications of repentance in Acts 26:20: 'repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance.'"

These days there seems to be so much that is challenging and tragic: illness and injury; people still struggling to make their way in this pandemic time; rumblings of a new variant to be wary of; an unjust war attempting to be rationalized on seemingly fabricated premises; racism; climate change, what is happening in our own personal and family lives—so much to face.

How are we to cope? What are we to do? If Jesus says repent, what does that look like amid all this?

It seems daunting to say the least, especially at a point when we are beyond tired, exhausted from what the past two years have brought us.

I sometimes wonder if the combination of fear and uncertainty, enforced inertia and overwhelm have brought us to a deep paralysis when it comes to trying to address any, never mind all, of these challenges.



The parable of the unfruitful fig tree seems to be a bit of a jump in logic. The fig tree has had three years to produce, and so far, nothing, so the landowner orders that it be cut down. There is good stewardship at work in this decision: if the tree is not producing, “Why should it be wasting the soil?” Something else that is productive could be planted in its place. “Surely the time has come, and reality must be faced,” says theologian Adam J. Copeland.

I think, though, that the gardener, pleading on behalf of the tree for reprieve, and offering to work **himself** at digging and fertilizing, speaks to God’s economy, God’s patience, God’s grace. There is still a chance for this tree, and the gardener offers to take on the project. We don’t know what happens, but I like to think that the gardener is persuasive enough to give the tree a reprieve.

So who is the gardener in this parable? At times I have seen the gardener as God, who in deep love, sees another way and offers it, who is prepared to take the time and to provide what it takes to give the tree new life. Other times, the gardener seems to be us, seeing a situation through different eyes, and responding to the universal call to build up the life of one who is ailing, the one in need.

So how do we do that? As I was driving to work the other day, I heard a number of inspiring stories in these very unsettled days.



A woman was interviewed about the Facebook page she helped to set up two years ago called Care Mongering in KW to give people a place to express their needs, particularly in relation to the pandemic, and to be connected with those who had some time or good available to help out with picking up groceries, prescriptions, personal care items, and more. There is a Care Mongering page for Centre Wellington where people have advertised a show that might lift people's spirits and a fellow records and posts videos of his music, including bagpipes!



A registered nurse was interviewed about having travelled to Ukraine as part of a medical team, for the second time in two months, to assist with surgeries for children with heart conditions. While the first time he went in February was relatively straightforward, this time the trip has been much riskier as air raid sirens go off and the rumbles of war can be heard in the background. When asked why he went back to much worse conditions he simply said, I have the skill and the expertise to help and there is so much need.



A fellow who works for Canadian Border Services is one of a group who is bringing three ambulances loaded with equipment and supplies across Europe to meet the Ukrainians fleeing into Poland to offer first aid and medical care.



A man from Ancaster was asked by a friend in Ukraine to meet him at the Polish border and take his little sister to care for her while the brother returned to Ukraine to fight. The man from Ancaster dropped everything to go to Poland. He has yet to meet his friend and his sister, but he has kept busy cooking for refugees who have been walking sometimes up to 35 hours with no sleep and nothing to eat or drink.



A woman from Vancouver has a cousin who lives in Warsaw very near a train station where many beleaguered Ukrainians are arriving daily. This woman is helping her cousin and niece to provide essentials for the refugees as they arrive. She has organized a community of donors in Vancouver and across Canada who contribute funds so she can use Amazon to purchase blankets, sleeping bags, personal care and hygiene items, towels and stuffies for small children that are delivered to her cousin in Warsaw and distributed by her cousin and niece at the train station.

I don't know what the lives of these angels was before they did what they are doing. But one thinks that some of them might have experienced a transformation as they have come to take on these actions.



Dennis E. Smith concludes his thoughts this way: “Repent and bear fruit worthy of repentance. More precisely, engage in the sort of spiritual, transformation sort of repentance that quite automatically results in a new way of living, in new eyes to see; engage in the sort of true transformational repentance that quite automatically leads to sensitivity to and loving action on behalf of those who are outcast, despised, needy; this is the essence of discipleship [as Luke sees it].”



One of my favourite quotes is by Jana Stanfield, who says, “I cannot do all the good that the world needs. But the world needs all the good that I can do.”

And we know we don’t do it alone. The gardener is there, Jesus is there to show us and encourage us in this new way of life of doing deeds consistent with repentance. And if we are ever in doubt of God’s love, all we need to do is look at the life, death and resurrection of God’s child Jesus, to know that love is deep beyond measure, and it is for us.

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

Amen.

Hymn: The King of Love VU 273

- 1 The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine forever.
- 2 Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth.
- 3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed;
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home rejoicing brought me.
- 4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.
- 5 Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!
- 6 And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never:
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever!

Joys and Concerns

- Birthdays:
 - Harvey Andrews celebrates on Saturday, March 26th

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 of the People *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1. Copyright 2012, alt.*

God of generous provision,
we are grateful for the many ways you care for us
and provide for the needs of your people.
In word, water, bread, and wine, you nourish and sustain us.
When we listen to you, we encounter delight,
and when we come to you, we live most fully.

Sometimes, though, we find ourselves in a dry and weary land . . .
Where we have misused and depleted creation,
drought and famine leave people and animals facing hunger and starvation.

Where we have polluted streams, rivers, and oceans,
fish and other water creatures suffer and die.
People without access to clean water become sick.
O God, help us to care for your creation in ways that make it possible
for all to have enough food and water—life, verdant and abundant.

Sometimes we find ourselves in a dry and weary land . . .
In places torn apart by war, where the earth itself has been ravaged;
where hospitals and homes and corner stores have been reduced to rubble;
where human lives have been destroyed and deformed;
where peace lies in the ruins and hope is buried.
O God, raise peace among us again.
Build hope up from the ground.
Restore in us and in the world's leaders
the will and determination to make an end of war and a new beginning for justice.

Sometimes we find ourselves in a dry and weary land . . .
When we are lost, unable to find our way to a place that is home for us;
when we are sad and weighed down with regret or grief;
when we are tired or sick in body, mind, or spirit.
O God, provide water in the desert and manna in the wilderness—
enough to sustain us for one more day,
even enough to revive us for the long haul.

Sometimes we find ourselves in the rich feast of your presence . . .
We celebrate a new beginning in our lives:
a new job, a new relationship, a new life,
a new day of sobriety, a second chance.
O God, we give thanks to you for this new blessing in our lives.

Sometimes we find ourselves in the rich feast of your presence . . .
We give thanks for the gift of healing after injury or illness;
for laughter that bubbles up to replace our tears;
for hope that spills its soothing light over the darkness of our despair.
O God, we thank you for the gift of wholeness and resurrection
promised to us in Jesus Christ.

Sometimes we find ourselves in the rich feast of your presence . . .
We enjoy the relief of forgiveness given and received;
we enjoy a breach in walls of division;
our own hearts are enlarged and our own vision is broadened by new understanding;
we welcome a prodigal home or are ourselves welcomed home again.
O God, we thank you that you are reconciling all things in heaven and on earth.
Be patient with us, we pray, in the varied landscapes of our lives.
Make us patient with one another and even with ourselves.
Do your good work within us, among us, and beyond us, too,
until our lives and all of creation come fully into your realm.
You, who so generously provide, deserve our praise, our grateful praise.
In Jesus' name we pray. **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: Rebuilding after Loss: Lisa's Story



Nothing prepares us to lose the people we love most in the world. Lisa's husband Steve was in and out of palliative care for years.

"It was a difficult journey. He wasn't ready to leave this life," Lisa says. "The week before he died he said, 'I'll surprise you yet. You'll see me walking around that circle with my cane.' But that didn't happen."

After Steve died, Lisa attended a widows' support circle facilitated by ORA, a Mission & Service partner. ORA, named after a Maori word meaning "life," helps people move through grief and loss using workshops and support circles.

"Hearing the stories and wisdom shared, the laughter and the tears, brought me to a place where I felt comfortable in sharing a bit of my own pain and my own journey. And there was this sense of solidarity in our pain. Because being a widow is a different kind of loss than losing a parent, a child, or a friend," Lisa says.

In the widows' group, there was an understanding that surpassed words.

"The support helped me work through things like 'What do I do with the wedding ring now?' Do you still wear it? Do you not wear it? And on a practical level, do you change the sheets because you can still smell your partner on the sheets? The first time you have to check that box on the government form, that you are no longer a Mrs. but a widow, I just burst into tears. ORA, just like other outreach ministries we have, is a tangible way of showing faith in action."

Your gifts through [Mission & Service](#) help people like Lisa rebuild their lives after loss.

“At one of the most difficult times of my life, your generosity through Mission & Service provided care, love, and comfort. Indeed, we are not alone. We live in God’s world. Thank you for your support,” says Lisa.

Offering Invitation *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1.** Copyright 2012, alt.*

Disciples of Jesus, children of God,
we often spend our money on that which is not true bread,
and labor toward things that will never satisfy.
In our offering, we give to things that are of God:
bread for the hungry,
good news for those who are oppressed,
the ministries of the church that welcome strangers and sons and
daughters alike.
We bring before God a portion of all that God has so freely given to us.

Offering Hymn: What Can I Do **MV 191**

What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I’ll sing with joy. I’ll say a prayer.
I’ll bring my love. I’ll do my share.

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 *Taylor Croissant, **Gathering: Lent/Easter 2022**, p.35. Used with permission.*

O God, as we change our hearts and minds to better follow you,
we see how you care for the vineyards of our souls with tenderness.
We offer you what fruit we have
that it might serve your purpose in reconciling the world
back to you through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Hymn: Will Your Anchor Hold**VU 675**

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife,
when the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift or firm remain?

Refrain:

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

It will surely hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers tell that the reef is near;
though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow. R

It will surely hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill our latest breath;
on the rising tide it can never fail
while our hopes abide within the veil. R

When our eyes behold, through the gathering night,
the city of gold, our harbour bright,
we shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,
with the storms all past for evermore. R

Commissioning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1.** Copyright 2012.*

On this third Sunday of Lent,
we are urged to shake off the complacency that
can overtake us;
to seek God as people in a dry and weary land seek water;
and to bear fruit in our daily lives
that contributes to God's kingdom of justice and love.

Change the Light/Blessings

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 it is moving everywhere, to everyone, with everyone.
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 C, Volume 1.** Copyright 2012.*

May the mercy of God ground us,
the love of Christ take root in us,
and the Holy Spirit grow in us,
that we may be ready for the coming of the kin-dom.

Household Prayer: Morning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1.** Copyright 2012.*

Gracious God,
this new day carries the potential for growth and new life.
Help me to attend to those things in me
that need care and attention.
Sow your word in me
that I may grow in faithfulness and understanding.
Shake me out of dull routines,
so that I may take part in the good news
you continue to tell urgently and passionately.
In Christ's name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1.** Copyright 2012.*

As I lie down this night in the shadow of your wings,
God of my life,
I know that you will be with me
even as you have helped me through this day.
Whether I am weary from the day,
or whether the day has been a rich feast of blessings,
I give thanks for your power and glory,
which are present in every circumstance.
As I give myself over to rest and sleep,
I remember that your steadfast love is better than life.
So, I pray, surround me with your love tonight and always.
In the peace of Christ I pray. Amen.