



August 28, 2022

Melville United Church

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Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

Office hours

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Web Site

Pastoral Care Numbers

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Martha Duncan

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Melville United Church
August 28, 2022

Presiding today - Rev. Tom Watson

Words Of Welcome

Announcements

- **Away on Vacation** – Rev. Lynda will be away on vacation from **August 10th to September 5th**. If you have a pastoral care emergency in that time, please contact Alison Rainford and she will connect you with the ministry personnel who is covering at that time. Worship services will be covered by Tom Watson and Ruth Cooke. Many thanks to all those looking after ministry matters in my absence. Blessings for the remainder of your summer!
- **Melville Photo Directory**: There have been two sessions of photos taken for the directory. There will be another session on **Wednesday, September 21st**. Please contact Lorna for your appointment. Everyone who has their photo in the book gets a free book and an 8" x 10" photo.
- **Tuition-Free Supportive Care Program** through Conestoga College – this is an 18-week program for home and community support workers across Ontario to receive tuition-free training to develop skills to deliver quality, safe, and ethical supportive care, as well as to collaborate with an interprofessional team in clients homes. Here is the website <https://www.conestogac.on.ca/fulltime/supportive-care> and those interesting in learning more can sign up for an information session by using this link <https://bit.ly/3QVIA70>
- **Kairos Blanket Exercise – Save the Date!** The Kairos Blanket Exercise has been developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and educators. It is an interactive and experiential teaching tool that explores the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the land we now know as Canada. It is a 2 to 3-hour workshop and will be offered **at Melville on Saturday, October 1st 1:30-4:30pm**. It is intended for those 14 and over, and is limited to 25-30 participants. Please contact Rev. Lynda to reserve a space.
- As more and more people find their dollar shrinking, and having to decide between rent and three meals a day, the demand for food bank assistance rises. We ask you to prayerfully consider if you are able to **support the food bank**, either with a donation of food, or financially.
- **Ukraine Appeal**
The invasion of Ukraine is costing precious lives and creating a humanitarian crisis as people flee to safety. Many millions of 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.**
- **Gifts with Vision** 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.
- **New Gifts with Vision for Ukraine**
A gift of \$25 will provide families fleeing Ukraine with a **hygiene kit** containing items like

toothpaste, laundry detergent and disinfectant

A gift of \$38 will provide **one food basket** with staples such as cooking oil, buckwheat, canned fish and more

A gift of \$40 provides **one hygiene kit plus a supply of incontinence products**

You can find the full catalogue at www.giftswithvision.ca

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

Land Acknowledgement *Peter Chynoweth, **Gathering: Pentecost 1 2022**, p.33. 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 Christ Candle

Call To Worship *(adapted from the writings of Terry Samuel)*

The invitation to listen is holy—a call to bridge building.

**And a high bridge it is...and risky. Its shape and sound
and colour are not yet discerned.**

Yet, its call is persistent. The echo lingers.

**For to listen is to reach out, to see into the realm of
new possibility.**

To listen is to hear—beneath, and beyond, and within—
for the whisper of a still small voice.

And a promise of love.

Come! Together, let us listen for God.

Hymn — Come and Find the Quiet Centre (VU 374)

1. Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see
All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

2. Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being face to face,
Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,
Raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

3. In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
Let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
In the Spirit's lively scheming, there is always room to spare!

Opening Prayer: God of all seasons, you give us warmth, rain, and light, that we might remember our need for re-creation. You remind us that to walk on the sand is to play on holy ground, to sit around a campfire at twilight is to be in harmony with all that surrounds us, to bask in the length of

days is to know your blessing. You call us to be find the quiet centre, to reflect, and give thanks. For we are your people. We come in the name of Christ. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 14:1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

SERMON SERIES "SEARCHING FOR GOOD NEWS"

"Life In Our Town: A Wedding"

In our series of sermons, we've been searching for good news. Two weeks ago, we searched for good news in the invitation to love the unlovable. Last week, we searched for good news in words and touches that heal. Today, we're going on a visit to Our Town...and one thing we're going to hear about is a wedding.

A wedding...there should be good news there... right?

So let's begin our visit to Our Town in the usual way.

Well, it's been a busy week in Our Town. Although, since we're in August, and it's been hot and humid, it hasn't taken just a whole lot for folks to feel busy even when they weren't doing much.

It's strange, really, the effect heat has on people.

- A while back, some women in Our Town formed a walking group, and they usually go along at a pretty good clip. However, in the hot, humid days of August it's more like a casual stroll. They spent more time stopping to smell the roses than walking. They'll pick up the pace again when it gets cooler.
- Gladys, the organist over at The Church of the Reluctant Apostle, usually plays the hymns at a pretty decent clip, but she's been doing them at least two gears slower the last few weeks. Doesn't want people to get so lathered up that they don't pay attention to the sermon.
- Even the dogs feel the heat. When Fred Bowers called his dog, Jasper, the other day to go for his morning walk, Jasper just looked at him, yawned, rolled over, stretched one leg out...and pointed a paw at the cat...as if to say, "Take her for a change. She needs the exercise more than I do."

I think the heats even got to Hank Vickers. Last Monday, he was watching Mildred mowing the lawn, stopping every few minutes to mop the sweat from her forehead. He finally got up and went outside.

"Mildred, this is just too much for you...having to do this whole lawn on a hot day like this. I've been getting tired just watching you. So I have an idea: Divide the lawn up into thirds, mow one-third on Monday, one-third on Wednesday, and one-third on Friday. It'll be a lot easier on you that way."

Mildred just smiled, turned the lawn mower off, and said, "Oh Hank, that's why I love you so much. You're always thinking of what's best for me." With that, she took a towel, mopped her forehead again, wrung out the towel, and walked into the house.

Hank looked at the lawn mower. He was going to put it away in the garage but then thought it was better to leave it right there. That way, on Wednesday, Mildred could just continue where she left off.

Willy Flugel—Willy's the pastor over at The Church of the Reluctant Apostle—was a bit late getting to coffee at Al's Café last Monday morning. When he sat down at the table, Jack Cameron said, "Hey, Willy, you were officiating at a wedding in the city on Saturday. How'd it go?"

Pastor Willy replied, "Jack, I wasn't officiating at the wedding. Just attending. Agnes, a niece on Etta's side, was getting married, and we were invited."

"Oh," said Jack Cameron, "I see. Anyway, how was it?"

"Well, Jack"...Willy paused and took a swig of his coffee..."I'd have to say it was the most interesting wedding I've ever attended."

"How so?" asked Milt Prosser.

And this is the story that Pastor Willy Flugel shared with the rest of the old guys at Al's on Monday.

Turned out that Willy wanted to spend some time in the religious book store on Saturday morning—he wanted to see if there was a sequel to his book of "200 Snappy Sermon Starters"—so he and Etta went into the city on Friday, the day before the wedding, and took a hotel room for overnight. And it's a good thing they did.

There were to be 50 guests at the wedding, and they were all coming from west of the city. But Willy and Etta were the only 2 who got there. The other 48 didn't make it. Here's what happened.

The wedding was to be at 2 in the afternoon on Saturday, and around noon there was a huge tie-up on the highway, 25 miles west of the city. Traffic was heavy, a car, trying to cut into another lane, cut too close in front of a tractor trailer...the tractor trailer veered to avoid hitting the car, sideswiped another vehicle, there was a chain reaction and over a hundred cars were involved in a pile-up. That caused the highway to be closed for over five hours.

So 48 wedding guests got caught in the jam-up. You know what it's like when an accident happens on the 401, and you're between exits so have no way at all to get around the pile-up, so you have no choice but to wait it out. In short, you're stuck.

Well, that's what happened to the 48 wedding guests. They were stuck. The jam-up wasn't cleared until 5 in the afternoon. So by the time they were freed from it, not only was the wedding over but the reception, which took place immediately following the wedding, was over too.

So, imagine if you will, the following scene. You're one of those 48 guests. You're in a convoy of cars that drive up to the reception place just as the bride and groom are pulling away in the limo, waving through the window as they leave on their honeymoon.

But you're amazed to see a crowd of 50 other people standing on the sidewalk, waving back at the bride and groom. Say what? My goodness, they're really not even dressed for a wedding.

And yet, some of them are holding hands, some are hugging each other...some of them have tears in their eyes. 50 people. You recognize Willy and Etta, but the other 48...they're total strangers!

"What?" asked Milt Prosser. "Who were these total strangers, Willy? And why were they at the wedding?"

"Well, that's the interesting part," replied Willy.

One of the people who was trapped in the accident on the highway phoned Agnes' mother and father to tell them what had happened, and that it looked as if they weren't going to make it on time. When her folks relayed the message to Agnes, she was really upset.

You can understand that, I'm sure. All the work that goes into a wedding—planning the ceremony and the reception, figuring out the guest list so that you have the people you want to be there attending. And now, due to a strange stroke of bad luck, none of them will be there. It's pretty disappointing. Not only won't those guests see your wedding, but 48 meals will be going to waste.

As I said, this was really upsetting for Agnes. But then she had an idea. And she talked it over with Bruce, the man she was marrying, and he liked it. Here's the idea.

Agnes has a friend who works at a mission. Homeless people come there for meals. And Agnes volunteers there from time to time. So she called her friend and asked her if it might be possible to gather up 48 people who come to the mission and invite them to be guests at the wedding and the reception.

And that's what happened. So both the wedding and the reception went on. With 50 guests just as planned. When it came time for speeches, one of the 48 from the mission—a man named Roger—stood up and asked if he could speak. The emcee invited him to come to the microphone. Here was his short speech.

"My name is Roger and I'd like to say something on behalf of the rest of us. Bruce, none of us from the mission ever met you before. Agnes, we've seen you helping there from time to time, but we never really got to know you. But are we ever glad to have been invited to take part in your wedding.

"By asking us to come, you made our day! You see, we rarely get the chance to attend things such as this, so it was a special treat for us. Even if we were stand-ins, so to speak, because the 'real' guests got stuck in a traffic jam.

"Other than that, all I want to say is that none of us will ever forget this day, and I'm sure neither of you will either. So, on behalf of all of us stand-ins, we wish the two of you all the best in your married life together."

When Bruce got up to reply, he had to wait for a bit, and catch his breath, because he was quite overcome with emotion. In the end, all he could say was, "Roger, thanks for your good wishes. And on behalf of both Agnes and me, thanks so much to all of you for being willing to come and be...as you say...stand-ins. You say that we made your day. Well, let me assure you that you folks made our day too!"

When Pastor Willy had finished the story, the old guys just sat there for a couple of minutes. Finally, Milt Prosser said, "Willy, what a great story! I can see why you said it was the most interesting wedding you ever attended."

"Yep," said Pastor Willy, "that it was. Without a doubt."

When Frank Birstead went home after coffee, he told Myrtle all about the wedding. Myrtle rocked back and forth in her rocking chair for a bit and then said, "Franklin, who would ever have thought that inviting a bunch of total strangers to your wedding could turn out to be so wonderful!"

"Hard to imagine, isn't it, Myrt," replied Frank.

"Although," continued Myrtle, "my mother used to say that strangers are only friends whom we haven't met yet. And that wedding sure seems to prove it. Also, hats off to Agnes and Bruce for turning a disappointment into a blessing."

With that, Myrtle Birstead got up from her chair, and headed for the kitchen. "I guess it's time for lunch, Franklin. I'll go make our usual wieners and beans."

Well, that's all the news from Our Town for this week. At least from the stories that I've heard.

Over the course of my ministry career, I have officiated at somewhere around 1,500 weddings. I have seen some pretty interesting things happen. But I have never been at one where 48 of the 50 guests weren't able to get there.

It would certainly put a damper on things. And we can all imagine how Agnes and Bruce felt. At least initially. But Myrtle Birstead is surely right in saying "hats off to Agnes and Bruce for turning what could have been a disappointment into a blessing."

Myrtle Birstead also mentioned something her mother said: Strangers are only friends whom we haven't met yet.

Remember...we've been on a search for good news. And therein lies the good news. When Agnes and Bruce decided to invite 48 people from the mission—total strangers—to take part in their wedding day, they were turning strangers into friends. That's good news.

It was also good news for the 48 people from the mission, who, as Roger said in his speech, rarely get the chance to go to something like a wedding.

I wonder who else besides Roger might have been in that group of 48. Perhaps someone like Sadie, the widow woman from two weeks ago who spent most of her time at the University of Chicago hospital—Sadie who, to most folks, was unlovable—might someone like Sadie have been in the group of 48 wedding guests?

Or how about the woman from last week—the woman whose face was so horribly disfigured that she didn't think believe other people wanted to interact with her...because she was so ugly? Was someone like her in the group of 48 guests?

Who would have thought that inviting a total stranger to a wedding could be a blessing? Turns out that Jesus thought that. He once said:

When you're going to put on a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.
And you will be blessed.

Invite the Sadies of the world. Invite the woman with the ugly face. Invite the folks from the mission.

For if you do that...hear that last line again: You will be blessed.

Oh, I'm sure that if we were to be holding a wedding, we'd still invite the special people in our lives—our relatives, our close friends—to be the guests. And I don't believe that Jesus was challenging that common practice at all.

What he was saying is that every person carries with them the grace of God. The poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind. Sadie. The woman with the ugly face. The people from the mission. Everyone we encounter carries with them something of the grace and goodness of God.

My goodness...even you and I carry with us something of the grace and goodness of God!

And if we're searching for good news...there it is!

Hymn — Deep in Our Hearts (MV 154)

1. Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,
Telling Creation that we are one.

2. Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;
Deep in our hearts there is a common goal;
Deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,
Justice and peace in harmony.

3. Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;
Deep in our hearts there is a common theme;
Deep in our hearts there is a common current,
Flowing to freedom like a stream.

4. Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,
Telling Creation that we are one.

Joys And Concerns

- Anniversary
 - Barry & Rossi Rawn celebrate 40 years on Aug. 28th
- Condolences
 - We offer sincere condolences to the family of Julie Lynn Lapp, wife of Mike Morrison. Julie passed away on Aug 19th, at the age of 45. She was a long-time member of Melville, along with her sister Dana Hauck and their father, John Cruden.
 - We offer deepest condolences to the family of Wilma Jamieson who passed away August 19th at the age of 100 years. Wilma was a long-time member of Melville and will be dearly missed.

Prayers of the People

The 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.

Offering

I know that Melville members continue to support the church through PAR or electronic means. Your ongoing support is sincerely appreciated. Thank you for all that you do.

Offering Hymn: What Can I Do (MV191)

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.

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 Prayer

Closing Hymn — Precious Lord, Take My Hand (VU 670)

Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When the darkness appears, and the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone.
At the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

(melodica and piano, then repeat last verse)

Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

Commissioning & Benediction:

May all the words that we speak

Be a blessing for all who hear them.

May all the things that we do

Be a blessing to all around us.

May all of our lives be a blessing to someone

Just as we have been blessed by others.

May it be so, this days and always.

Amen.

Postlude